

**THE SCHOOL AS AN *IMAGINED COMMUNITY*: THE POLITICAL AND THE**  
**EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE OF THE STATE TO THE PERMANENT PRESENCE**  
**OF 'BLACK' IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN THE BRITISH EDUCATIONAL**  
**SYSTEM IN POST-1945 BRITAIN**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

*“Identities are the names we give the different ways 1) we are positioned by, and 2) we position ourselves within the narratives of the past.” (Hall, 1990: 225).*

*“The nation is imagined as a community...” (Anderson, 1990:16).*

The recurring theme of the marginalisation of ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their offspring in post-1945 Britain is set within the framework of racism and English nationalism. The term ‘black’ is used here as a descriptor for peoples from the Commonwealth countries such as the West Indies, India and Pakistan. ‘Black’ immigrants came to England as British subjects under the aegis of the British Nationality Act 1948. Studies already exist that deal with the permanent presence of ‘black’ immigrant settlers in different ways, but not within the setting of Bernard Anderson’s concept of *the imagined community*. My argument is structured around the process of racialisation, which was the mechanism used by the state to construct a fixed ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their children. The sites for effecting this discursive construction are parliament and the school. The aim was to exclude them from *the imagined community*. They are ‘outsiders’ and not included in the national identity. *The imagined community*, as applied to the English society, is the nation. *Englishness* is constructed as the national identity. The national identity had the essential characteristic of whiteness. This was supported by the Anglo-Saxon myth.

The aim of this study is to provide an explanation of the experiences of ‘black’ immigrant children in the history of education in post-1945 Britain. Their marginalisation represents the position in which the state has positioned ‘black’ immigrant settlers. The structure of my argument is based on historical research and social theory. It allows for the interpretation of

such concepts as '*the imagined community*', '*Englishness*', 'racialisation', 'identity', 'denial' and 'determinism', and the 'biological organism' analogy. By presenting the experiences of 'black' children in the schools as a micro-history, I was able to expand my focus to the racialised identity that the state created for 'black' immigrant settlers and their children.

Second and third generations of 'black' immigrant settlers asserted their 'claim to belong' as an integral part of the wider society. They exercised individual and collective agency through the 'Black Britishness' movement in an effort to tell their narrative and create self-identification. In so doing, they did not achieve inclusion into mainstream society. Did they instead create *an imagined community*?

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Mechanisms Which Situate *The Imagined Community* In The English Society

*“The nation is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this ‘fraternity’ that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.” (Anderson, 1990: 16)*

*“I think this week what has shown is that profound changes have happened... there has been a profound cultural change. I have just been re-reading Enoch Powell, the ‘rivers of blood’ speech. His prophecy was absolutely right in one sense. The Tiber didn’t flow, but flames lambent wrapped around Tottenham, wrapped around Clapham. But it wasn’t inter-communal violence. This was where he [Enoch Powell] was completely wrong. What has happened is that the substantial section of the chavs that you wrote about has become black. The whites have become black. A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion. Black and white, boy and girl operate in this language together. This language, which is wholly false, which is this Jamaican patois that’s been intruded in England. This is why so many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country.”*  
(BBC News UK. Interview on BBC Newsnight with David Starkey. First aired Friday 22 August 2011.

*When Benedict Anderson’s concept of the imagined community is applied to the English society, the ‘story of the Island race’ unfolds as a story of Englishness (Myers, 2004:139).*

The imagined community is the nation. *Englishness* is the national identity, which is also imagined. *Englishness* has been reconstructed during different periods of England’s history, when the state decided that the stability of the national identity was being threatened by the enemy from ‘within or without’. One of the periods of reconstruction of *Englishness* was

from the mid-1950s onwards. This was when the state felt that 'black' immigrant settlement posed a 'black' threat to *Englishness*. The term 'black' is used here as a descriptor for peoples from Commonwealth countries such as the West Indies, India and Pakistan. The phase of reconstruction from the mid-1950s will be explained in chapter two of my study. One of the key mechanisms used by the state to reproduce *Englishness* was the process of racialisation through political and educational discourse. According to Miles et al, the process of racialisation takes place where a group is defined as a 'race' and given a group identity by another group. (Miles et al, 1989: 6).

The second extract above pertains to the continuation of the unfolding of 'the story of the Island race' through the racialised discourse used by the constitutional historian, David Starkey. In essence, he placed the blame for the riots in August 2011 squarely with a form of black male culture. According to Frank Reeves, political discourse did not have to contain racial terms in order to give 'black' immigrant settlers an unfavourable image. (Reeves, 1983: 219). In the case of David Starkey, the racial element in his comments was evident. For example, he gives the picture of the 'black' male as being responsible for 'A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic, gangster culture'. The image that this language presents can be readily recognised by other English people. What also becomes evident from Starkey's discourse is that 'black' immigrant settlers, especially the youth, were seen as being linked to criminal activities. The connecting factor between these two extracts is the racial element: the essential element of whiteness remains endemic to *Englishness* even in the twenty-first century.

The starting point of my study is the overarching framework of *the imagined community*. This is the English nation from which the 'black' immigrant settlers and their offspring were

excluded. This study will present the mechanisms with which the state constructed and reconstructed *Englishness*. The data that offered ways of researching and analysing racialised discourse include parliamentary debates as recorded in Hansards, political speeches and daily newspapers. This type of data will be used to explore the role of parliament as one of the agents of the state in the discursive reconstruction of *Englishness*. Other significant sources are published research covering the interdependence of the ideologies of racism and English nationalism. The use of ethnographical studies will provide an avenue for analysing how the process of racialisation operates in the classroom. Interviews with ‘black’ pupils and white teachers will offer oral statements, which are underpinned with a racial element.

The construction of my argument is based on historical research and the interpretation of such concepts as ‘*the imagined community*’, ‘*Englishness*’, ‘racialisation’, ‘identity’ and ‘denial’ and ‘determinism’. The structure of my argument also allowed for the application of analogies in order to place concepts within concrete situations. For example, in section 4.1. of chapter four, I used the rise of the modern working class as an analogy to the situation of ‘black’ immigrant settlers responding to the exclusionary practices of the *imagined community*. Members of the ‘black’ population exercised collective and individual agency in order to create their self-identity. They positioned themselves ‘within the narrative of the past’, which meant that they held on to their culture with its differences. (Hall, 1990: 225). Similarly, the modern working class had maintained their culture when the ruling class recognised them as part of *the imagined community*. This method of applying an analogy to a concrete situation contributes to my claim to originality in the writing of my study.

My claim to originality also includes my interpretation of the concept of *the imagined community* and its application to the English society. I have also interpreted the concept of

*Englishness* in order to show how the state used the mechanisms, such as parliamentary debates and nationality legislation, to reproduce it as a white preserve. The other agent of the state that had the role of reconstructing *Englishness* was the education system and particularly the institution of the school. My interpretation of how the concept of racialisation was applied to the discursive construction of a 'black' identity for 'black' immigrant settlers in the wider society and for 'black' pupils in the schools corroborates my claim to originality. It is my contention that the process of racialisation as applied by parliament and the school, and explored in chapters two and three, for example, is influenced by the concepts of 'denial' and 'determinism'. The concept of 'denial' is explained by Pajaczkowska as a device used by the dominant party in order to cover up their own ruthlessness and aggression by maintaining 'the fiction that 'foreigners are dirty' or that 'black men are violent''. (Pajaczkowska, 1992:201). 'Determinism' is defined by Syer as a way of thinking that works on 'the inevitability of causal processes'. (Syer, 1982: 86) For example, this concept is applied in the argument in chapter three that explores the school as a site for the reconstruction of *the imagined community*.

The construction of my argument involves the combination of social theory and historical research. This method offers another way of analysing and writing about the experiences of 'black' immigrant pupils in the history of education in post-1945 Britain. According to Burke, 'without the combination of history and theory we are unlikely to understand either the past or the present'. (Burke, 1992: 2). Burke suggested the use of micro-history to make connection with the wider society: (Burke, 1992: 42).

Therefore, my analysis of the experiences of 'black' immigrant pupils in the history of education represents the use of micro-history. From the micro-position I then expand my

focus to the wider examination of the racialisation process with which the state created a 'black' identity for 'black' immigrant settlers and their children. This method offers a way of exposing the racial element in political and educational discourse. Chapters two and three are particular examples of this method. My analysis of David Starkey's BBC 2 Newsnight interview offers yet another example of the use of the application of social theory to expose racialised discourse.

The racialised discourse of David Starkey shows that the recurring themes of 'black' immigration, *Englishness* and multiculturalism continue to be informed by 'the story of the Island race'. His comments included the remarks that 'if one listened to David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, one would think that he was white'. (BBC News UK. Interview on BBC Newsnight with David Starkey. First aired Friday 22 August 2011). This statement could be interpreted to mean that the process of racialisation still targets 'black' immigrant settlers and their offspring. The discursive reconstruction of *Englishness* still determines that to be part of the national identity, one has to be white. Consider a comment by the actor John Cleese. While on a visit to Australia he was reported by the press as saying that 'London was no longer English'. (*The Daily Express*, 1 September 2011. p.5). It would seem that the presence of a large body of 'black' immigrants has changed the face of London. David Starkey's comments also suggested that many English people shared his opinion that there was 'this sense of literally a foreign country'.

The aim of this study is to offer new ways of researching, analysing and writing about the experiences of 'black' immigrant pupils in the history of education. In this study the school became a site for the discursive reconstruction of *the imagined community*. In order to put the role of the school into perspective, it is necessary to explain the relevance of the concepts of

'*the imagined community*', '*Englishness*', 'racialisation', 'determinism' and 'denial'. The ideologies of racism and English nationalism, and the 'New Racism' are shown as underpinning political and educational discourse. For example, chapter two explains the role Parliament, as one of the agents of the state in the discursive reconstruction of *Englishness*, played. The mechanism used in that chapter is the interplay of the ideologies of English nationalism and racism in parliamentary debates and the resultant legislation. One of the aims of parliamentary debate was to control 'black' immigration. The other aim was to construct a 'black' identity for 'black' immigrant settlers and their children, which separated them from *Englishness*.

Other studies deal with the presence of 'black' immigrant settlers in England in different ways, but not within the overarching framework of the concept of *the imagined community*. For example, Fryer traced the theme of racism from the time of the empire through to twentieth century England. He showed that 'racial labels survive as devices to shut out a section of the population from power, to make them into second-class citizens'. (Fryer, 1988: xi). Racism was also a framework for Sivanandan. One of his studies showed how the control of 'black' settlement was effected through nationality laws, especially the 1971 Immigration Act. The 'patriality' term in that law changed the status of 'black' immigrants to that of 'migrant' and 'alien'. His approach does not link the state's control of 'black' immigrant settlement to the reconstruction of *Englishness*.

The final section of this chapter briefly outlines, under a series of headings, the key mechanisms that I will argue supported the construction and reconstruction of *Englishness*.

## **The Anglo-Saxon Myth**

The use of Anglo-Saxon myth sets the pattern of racism, which is one of the mechanisms that constructed and still reconstructs *Englishness*. One had to be white to be of the English race and thus be 'of' *the imagined community*. In the investigation of Robert Miles, he identified racism as an ideology. According to Miles, ideology may be seen as a form of discourse proposed by the dominant class in society. Such discourse involves viewing the contact between human beings and the social relations between them. (Miles, 1989: 42). Biological features formed the criteria that distinguished one collective group from another. (Miles, 1989: 79, 84). Based on this interpretation, 'black' immigrants were recognised by the English society as a collective group, which set them apart through their biological and cultural characteristics. Reginald Horsman claimed that the idea of the 'English race' was grounded in the Anglo-Saxon myth. This myth was developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to establish a source of national identity. According to Horsman this myth served to revive the early freedom of these people, which had been crushed by the Norman Conquest. They had been known as a 'freedom loving people, enjoying representative institutions and a flourishing primitive democracy'. (Horsman, 1976: 387). However, it was their link with their German ancestors that brought the English closest to describing racial characteristics rather than institutional excellence. (Horsman, 1976: 389). The eighteenth century marked a shift in the emphasis from the continuity of free institutions to the inherent racial traits that supposedly explained them. This claim of inherent racial traits fostered the belief in the racial superiority of the English race. Robert Miles observed that the idea of the existence of the English as a superior 'race' was an 'inclusive categorisation, which necessarily had exclusive implications, particularly in the light of the extensive activity

of English merchant capital within the world market'. (Miles, 1950; 33.) H.A. McDougall's comment supported this view:

*"On balance, the myth of Anglo-Saxons served England's national purpose well. Belief in their racial supremacy encouraged visionary Englishmen to look beyond their shores to other continents and proceed to build a great world empire to support a vibrant domestic society."* (McDougall, 1982: 129-30) (Cited in Miles, 1950: 33).

Based on this foundation the English race was constructed as white, homogenous and superior. According to Myers, the English race is constructed as '*...an Island race – decent, tolerant and homogeneously white...*' (Myers, 2004: 139-140). Looking back at the language of Benedict Anderson's concept, it can be interpreted that such terms as '*deep horizontal comradeship*' and '*fraternity*' in the English situation are well suited to the process of inclusion and exclusion. Chapters one, two and three will explore the process of racialisation, which the state used as a key mechanism in the construction of a 'black' identity for 'black' immigrant settlers and their children. The process of racialisation was informed by 'the story of an Island race'.

### **The Application of the 'Biological Organism' Analogy**

The process of inclusion and exclusion was supported by the application of the 'biological organism' analogy, which had been developed by the economist John Hobson in the late nineteenth century. The 'full organic formula' will be explored in Chapter one. The essence of the formula was that society was the functioning 'body'. The 'body' demanded all members of society, the 'limbs', to be active in supporting 'the body'. In return "each 'limb', each cell has a 'right' to its due supply of blood." (Hobson, 1974: 80-81). When applied to



the English society, the ruling class recognised the working class as a 'limb' of English society. Education was the vehicle that was used by the state to situate the process of inclusion. According to John Hobson, "Education is the opportunity of all opportunities." (Hobson, 1974: 109). Adult members of the working class learned how to think differently and to broaden their interests through the educational courses offered by the University Extension Movement. For example, a 'Hull working joiner' expressed how he had benefitted: 'I am able to take broader views of questions and my interests are widened. My life is altogether brighter and happier'. (Rowbotham, 1981). (Cited by Steele, 1997: 40). In addition there was a network of labour colleges through the country 'devoted to the interests of the working class. (Simon, 1974: 324). According to Dodd, "the 'working class' as a class was identified as male." (Dodd, 1986: 8). It was, therefore, the maleness of the 'working class' that was harnessed by the ruling class. An example of this approach was the expansion of the political franchise in the 1860s to include working-class men. It has to be remembered too that 'the existing working-class culture and values markedly influence English political culture'. Some of the effects of this impact were the 'founding and development of the welfare state and eventually the enfranchising of women'. (Steele, 1997: 46) In the light of the language of Anderson it could be said that the ruling class identified the working class as part of the 'the horizontal comradeship'. They were then assigned different, rather than unequal, responsibilities. (Anderson, 1991: 16). It is significant to my thesis that this 'biological organism' analogy was never applied to 'black' immigrants and their dependents to render them as part of *the imagined community*. That application will never take place because of their colour: they are not white.

### **'Invented Traditions' Reconstructed *Englishness* Over Time**

According to Hobsbawm, education aimed at inculcating 'certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition'. (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1). This claim should be looked at in the light of the promotion of values of the ruling class in a hierarchical social and educational structure. The old universities of Oxford and Cambridge acted as guardians of English national culture during the latter part of the nineteenth century: they were at the centre of the process of remaking the English national identity. The feeder schools for these universities were the public schools. (Dodd, 1986: 3). This ruling class network of education was linked to the home and the rearing of children. The application of the 'biological organism' analogy to the role of women can be seen as assigning them with different responsibilities from those that were assigned to men. The rearing of children involved making sure that they were educated and imbued with traditional values. Deep within this network was the custom where the emphasis was placed on the qualities of manliness and patriotism. The identification of *Englishness* with masculinity affected the curriculum in the public schools. Classics was considered to be the perfect subject for boys and this was carried on into university. (Dodd, 1986: 6). Chapters one and three explain the discursive construction and reconstruction of *Englishness*.

### **Education outside the classroom.**

Exhibitions, celebrations and events could be interpreted as educational and political discourses, which constructed and reconstructed *Englishness*. According to the social historian, Raphael Samuel, history could be learnt through topography. (Cited in Grosvenor, 2004: 387). The sites involved here were galleries, museums, public spaces and national

exhibitions. For example, the theme of Empire permeated all the pavilions in the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. The exhibition was preceded by a programme of study arranged by The Board of Education. The aim was to help the visiting school children absorb as much historical and geographical knowledge as possible from the exhibits. *The Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study* was linked to this study. The reconstruction of *Englishness* in a period of uncertainty about national identity was part of the 'mission of national education'. (Dodd, 1987: 94). The country had just emerged from the sufferings of the First World War. The people had to be reassured of the nation's greatness. The spectacle of the exhibition was meant to have this effect. While displaying the greatness of the English race as masters of the empire the exhibition was saturated by racialised discourse. The 'black' populations of the countries in the empire were portrayed by way of stereotypes. English children would have seen pictures of labourers who were 'black' and set apart as the underclass in the empire. Associated school texts would have the effect of reinforcing this image.

### **The construction of English as the national language**

According to Dodd, the English language came to signify a sense of *Englishness*. (Dodd, 1986: 111). The Board of Education, through its 1910 Circular, directed that English should be incorporated as a discipline in its own right in state and public schools, as well as universities, at national level. In this reconstruction of *Englishness* the study of English in school surpassed that of the classics. Working class children in state schools, as well as the adults in University Extension colleges gained some benefit from the study of English. English was seen as one of the cultural tools engaged in boosting the 'advanced teaching and research in science and other fields of 'modern' study, as applied to industrial organisation

and technological development'. (Dodd, 1986: 89). The requirement for proficiency in English that 'black' immigrants had to meet will be expanded in Chapter three.

**The English consider 'black' immigration to be a threat to *the imagined community*, but the 'black' immigrants claim an attachment to *Englishness***

Chapter two puts into perspective the fact that society does not remain static. One of the features of *the imagined community* has been immigrants settling in England, but they were white. For example, the Irish came in the twentieth century, mainly as labourers. The English government regarded them as internal migrants rather than as foreigners. Chapter two shows that the state did not apply 'the numbers argument' to the large numbers of Irish immigrants. On the other hand, that argument was applied to the influx of 'black' immigrant settlers. According to Paul, 'the politics of nationality and immigration in Britain are organized around exclusions and inclusions based on skin colour'. (Paul, 1997: p. xii). The permanent presence of the Irish immigrants did not threaten the white homogeneity of *the imagined community*. According to Zig Layton-Henry, one of the reasons why there was no government policy to control the inflow of Irish immigrants when they came was that they were white. The other reason he gave was that Ireland was 'an integral part of the United Kingdom.' (Layton-Henry, 1992: 4-5). The 'biological organism' analogy could be applied to the Irish immigrants as regards their acceptability. They were white and could be easily integrated. Parliament was a site for the interplay of the ideologies of racism and English nationalism as regards the political response to the permanent settlement of 'black' immigrants. Under the British Nationality Act 1948 all Commonwealth citizens had been defined as British citizens with the right of entry and settlement in Britain. This Act had implicitly confirmed that the Commonwealth was a potential source of labour. Chapters two,

three and four explore the implications of this right of entry and settlement under such themes as ‘black’ immigrant settlement, ‘black’ pupils in the English school system, the claim made by West Indians to the Mother Country, and self-identification.

Chapter 2 shows that the state used parliament as a site for the reconstruction of English national identity. Both primary and secondary ‘black’ immigration were targeted by legislation. According to the meaning of ‘patrials’ under the Immigration Act 1971, only white Commonwealth citizens qualified. The ideology of the New Racism and the British Nationality Act 1981 are discussed as mechanisms that continued the reconstruction of *Englishness*.

### **The school as a site for the discursive reconstruction of the imagined community**

Although the racial composition of the English society was changing with the arrival of ‘black’ immigrants from the 1950s onwards, *the imagined community* was being reproduced in the school. The ‘black’ pupil population in schools was under the ‘gaze’ of the state. Chapter three will explore the discursive reconstruction. For example, Roland Moyle, Labour MP for Lewisham, emphasised the unpopularity of the effect that the growth of numbers of ‘black’ pupils in the schools had produced. He saw this as a threat to the ‘whole system of education’. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 759 (1967-68) HMSO, col. 1314). The policy of dispersal in Circular 7/65 of the Department of Education and Science, together with the ideologies of assimilation and integration, form part of the mechanism of schooling used in the process of racialisation in the school system.

The classroom will be discussed as a site in its own right where such mechanisms as teacher identity, teacher racism, the requirement of proficiency in English, the curriculum and the concept of *cultural capital* will be explored. Teacher identity had developed over time based on the 'invented tradition' that the ideal teacher should act as a symbol of *Englishness*.

According to Grosvenor and Lawn, Cyril Norwood presented the link between 'the nation, the school and its teachers.' (Grosvenor *et. al.* 2001:360). The significance of the link was that the teacher had to be well versed in the morals and values of English culture. The significance of the absence of 'black' teachers from the classroom until after the 1960s will be explored.

### **'Black British' Identity**

'Black' immigrants who had settled here claimed an attachment to *Englishness*. Those claims were not recognised. They were of the population, but they were not 'of' *the imagined community*. It was also significant that second generation members of the 'black' population were also called immigrants. Such legislation as The Immigration Act 1971 and The Nationality Act 1981 qualified who were nationals and who were not. Chapter four discusses what mechanisms were used by members of the 'black' population to challenge *the imagined community*. This chapter will also put into perspective the exercise of agency by 'black' pupils in an effort to create their own self-identification.

### **Conclusion**

This study is about presenting an argument that uses Anderson's concept of *the imagined community* to suggest a new way of thinking about how 'black' children have experienced

and continue to experience schooling in Britain. *The* concept of *the imagined community* as applied to the English situation would seem to have come full circle. The mechanisms that sustained *the imagined community* have helped to put such ‘invented traditions’ as the Anglo-Saxon Myth and the ‘biological organism’ analogy into perspective. When the ‘black’ immigrants settled in England they changed the character of the community because of the colour of their skin and their different traditions. That was the reality. However, the political and educational response of the state took the form of the construction of a ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their offspring through parliament and the school. Such mechanisms as the policy of dispersal and the ideologies of assimilation and integration were used to reconstruct *the imagined community*.

Members of the ‘black’ community exercised individual and collective agency to challenge the exclusionary practices of *the imagined community*. They claimed a certain affinity to *Englishness*. They forged such movements as ‘Black Britishness’ in an effort to create their own self-identification. In so doing, they in fact also formed *an imagined community*.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The Construction and Reconstruction of *Englishness***

*“Englishness, like any other national identity is continually made and remade.”* (Myers, 2004: 135).

*“[The nation] is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this ‘fraternity’ that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”* (Anderson, 1990: 16).

*“...black and Asian children were grouped together in a racialised category called ‘immigrant’.”* (Chessum, 1997: 416).

This thesis will argue that the experiences of ‘black’ pupils in schools in post-1945 Britain resulted from the process of racialization that the state used to create a ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ immigrant settlers from the mid- 1950s onwards. This argument provides new ways of thinking, researching and writing about these experiences.

This study is structured within the framework of Benedict Anderson’s concept of *the imagined community* as applied to the English society. According to the concept, the nation is *the imagined community*. The national identity that is constructed is *Englishness*. As such it can be reconstructed from time to time. Within this framework my argument sets out the periods of construction and reconstruction of *Englishness* and the reasons why the state embarked on such action. I shall use a chronological approach to explain, for example, how



the state's creation of a 'black' identity for the 'black' immigrant settlers and their children came about and why. In order to do this, I need to show what mechanisms the state used to construct *the imagined community* from which the 'black' immigrant settlers were excluded. According to 'the story of the Island race' *the imagined community* is '*homogeneously white*'. (Myers, 2004: 139). To be 'of' *the imagined community* one had to be of the English race, and that meant being white. This essential characteristic of 'whiteness' denotes the racial element that is featured throughout my argument. *Englishness*, or the English national identity, still requires the essential feature of whiteness in the twenty-first century. Consider the racial element in a report printed in *The Times* in 2011. The statement that is pertinent to my argument is this: "...if you went into Slough you wouldn't see a white face there. We are the last bastion of Englishness. And I want to keep it that way." (*The Times*, 15 March 2011). The context in which this statement was made concerned the casting of characters in the television series known as *Midsomer Murders*. The village of *Midsomer* is a fictitious one, but the co-creator behaved as if the village was real. He was adamant in his view that if there were ethnic minority characters in this village it would cease to be an English village.

I have used the framework of *the imagined community* to explain the process of racialisation, which resulted in the marginalisation of 'black' immigrant settlers and their children. This approach provides a way of researching and writing about race in the history of education. My contention is that the racialisation of 'black' pupils is one aspect of the reconstruction of *Englishness*. The other aspect of this process is the use of legislation by Parliament. The research into the construction of English national identity from the later nineteenth century onwards offers a way to trace the state's responses in periods when it seemed that the national identity was threatened from without and from within. Support for this view can be gleaned from the wording in this extract from Dodd:

*“The obverse of a nation, which is insisted upon as being solid, is a nation feared as fragile. Englishness had to be constantly reproduced, and its phases of its most intense reproduction - borne at its finest moments - have simultaneously been phases of threat to its existence from within and without.”* (Dodd, 1986: 29).

The chapter is divided into six sections incorporating the mechanisms as explained in the Introduction.

I have structured my argument so that the framework of *the imagined community* puts the issue of race into perspective. The response of the state to ‘black’ immigration settlement should be interpreted within the context of the interplay of racism and English nationalism. Although the reality was that ‘black’ immigrants settled in England from the mid-1950s onwards, the state was committed to excluding them from *the imagined community*. The framework of *the imagined community* offers a new way of researching and writing about the immediate connection between the interdependence of racism and English nationalism and the racialisation of ‘black’ immigrant pupils.

Other studies recount some experiences of West Indian pupils in the state school system, but the racial element is not placed within the context of *the imagined community*. For example, Lorna Chessum recorded the experiences of West Indian pupils in Leicester through interviews with past pupils of schools in Leicester. She concluded that West Indians had suffered from the process of racialisation, both in school and in the wider society. However, she does not use the reference of *the imagined community*. (Chessum, 2000: 166).

Kevin Myers argues that ‘the experience of immigrant and ethnic minorities in post-war Europe represents a significant silence in the history of education in Europe’. (Myers, 2009:

801). In the English situation, Roy Lowe's *Schooling and Social Change* (1997) is recognised by Myers as representing 'one of the first attempts by a historian of education to take race seriously as an analytical variable, and to accord significant space in a general narrative to understanding the experiences of minority ethnic students and communities in the education system.' (Myers, 2009: 805). Although Lowe relates racism in education to the differential outcomes of formal education that ultimately lead to limited chances in employment and lifestyle, he does not set racism in education within the framework of the discursive reconstruction of *Englishness*. (Lowe, 1997).

According to Myers, Ian Grosvenor's *Assimilating Identities: Racism and Educational Policy in Post-1945 Britain* is a substantive study of the experiences of post-war 'black' immigrants in education in England. In particular, Grosvenor explores 'historical evidence in different ways' and embarks on new ways of reconstructing the 'agency of groups who were, and are, routinely denied a history of agency in Britain'. (Myers, 2009: 807).

In my study, the reconstruction of *Englishness* forms the overarching framework in which the process of racialisation of 'black' immigrant settlers and their children is put into effect. The parliamentary debates in Hansards offer another source for researching the interplay of racism and English nationalism which generated the nationality legislation. Chapter three explores the part played by the school in the racialisation process from the mid-1950s onwards. The school was a site for the discursive reconstruction of *imagined community*. The interviews with past pupils of Leicester schools were useful in the analysis of the experiences of 'black' pupils. An interview with a 'black' teacher showed that 'black' teachers were rarely employed by the local educational authority. (Chessum, 2000: 167). The use of ethnographic accounts of the relationship between white teachers and 'black' pupils in the classroom was

an effective tool in presenting the response of the pupils in that setting. The ethnographies acted as a useful tool with which to analyse the way in which the subjective judgement of white teachers resulted in 'black' pupils being placed in CSE groups rather than in GCE examination sets.

The next section puts into perspective the role of educational institutions that constructed *Englishness* over time.

### **1. 1. Educational institutions acted as guardians of English national culture in the later nineteenth century and the twentieth century.**

(Dodd, 1986: 95).

*“...there is certainly evidence to support the thesis that ‘Englishness’ and national culture were reconstituted in order to incorporate and neuter various social groups - for example, the ‘working-class’, women, the Irish who threatened the social order...”* (Dodd, 1986: 2).

Education, according to Hobsbawm, was one of the practices of the ‘invented traditions’ that aimed at inculcating ‘certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition’, (1983: 1). There is a connection between this claim and the argument put forward by Dodd as regards the role of such educational institutions as the old universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as the public schools that were designated as feeder schools for those universities during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was the masculinity of the ruling class that was being given priority as the foundation of *the imagined community*. According to Dodd the emphasis was placed on the quality of manliness: “‘vigorous, manly and English’ was the popular collocation’. (Dodd, 1986: 3). The practice of nurturing the boys of this class could be

compared to Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. Bourdieu regarded 'habitus' as 'a way of being' that was inculcated in the young through the family, the school and other institutions over generations. (Bourdieu, 2000: 17) (Cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2003: 69).

The role assigned to women as a functioning part of *the imagined community* was linked to the nurturing of the young male of this class. However, this function was not imposed on the women. Through the effective application of hegemony the women of the ruling class were won over to acknowledge that their responsibility was the home and the rearing of children, which implied that they were educated and imbued with the traditional values of *Englishness*. According to Gramsci, the establishment of hegemony required negotiation and the "active consent" on the part of the subordinated. (Gramsci, 1971) (Cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2003). An example of this was the acceptance of the role voiced by Eleanor Rathbone who held that women were 'the natural custodians of childhood. That, at least, is part of the traditional role assigned to us by men, and one that we never repudiated'. (Lewis, 1984:105).

The next section shows how the working class gained recognition by the ruling class.

## **1.2. The working class as a 'limb' of the national 'body', which is *the imagined community*.**

*"From each member in a biological organism are demanded certain functional activities for the support of the life of an organism... in a body which is in health and functions economically, everyone contributes to the life of the organism according to its powers...*

*Each 'limb', each cell has a 'right' to its due supply of blood."* (Hobson, 1974: 80-81).

This biological analogy of ‘society as an organism’ was developed by the economist John Hobson in the later part of the nineteenth century. The principle behind it is an analysis of society as an organism. (Hobson, 1974: xiv). The outcome of this analysis was the ‘full organic formula’: “From each according to his powers, to each according to his needs.” (Hobson, 1974; 81). This formula was then translated into the apportionment of work and its products. Hobson also drew on the theory of John Ruskin that the end of economic activity should be ‘life’ and ‘souls of good quality’. (Ruskin, 1899) (Hobson, 1974: xiv). The remedial policy that Hobson hoped for was that the “working class must, through trade unionism, co-operation and legislation, secure a larger share of the national income. Death duties, a progressive income tax and the taxation of land values, all follow from this.” (Hobson, 1974: xv). This economic aspect of the organic formula was matched by a political side. Hobson held the view that the government should encourage ‘trust in the people’, which could be tested by the holding of a referendum. The ultimate aim of the organic view of society was a reform programme based on equal opportunity for all and the promotion of social justice, which included equal opportunities in education, an income and an electoral voice.

The interpretation follows the above extract from Hobson, which can be said to support the reconstruction of *Englishness* in the later nineteenth century and the twentieth century so that hegemony was rebuilt in a society that rests on ‘hierarchical educational and social order’. Dodd is here alluding to the English class structure with its ruling class and working class. To go back to Anderson’s concept of *the imagined community*, he does acknowledge that such a nation would be characterised with ‘*actual inequality and exploitation*’.

Education acted as a vehicle through which to co-opt the skills of the working class to contribute towards the 'common culture'. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 provided local authorities with the framework within which to make schooling compulsory. This was achieved by 1880. Adult male members of the working class, in particular, gained benefits from attending the labour colleges that had been set up throughout the country. (Simon, 1974: 324). According to Dodd, 'the working-class as a class was identified as male.' (Dodd, 1986: 8). In keeping with the reconstruction of English national identity, it was the maleness of the working-class that was harnessed by the ruling-class. Their way of life had been identified in sociological analyses as simple and practical. A typical area of study was the heartland of 'unknown England', namely, London's East End. Social tension developed between the working class and the ruling class in Victorian England. One way out of this situation was provided by education. Hobson recognized that education was 'the opportunity of opportunities'. (Hobson, 1974: 109). According to Simon, strategic initiatives involved negotiations between the aristocracy and the business class under the aegis of 'concern for "national efficiency"'. (Simon, 1965: 175) (Cited in Dodd, 1986: 90). One of these strategies was the establishment of programmes of 'educating, governing and mobilising a majority population'. (Simon, 1965: 175) (Cited in Dodd, 1986: 90). According to Tom Steele, 'the modern historical compromise and political settlement between the classes' contributed to the making of the modern working class. (Steele, 1997: 36).

This development showed that the working-class maintained their existing strong culture and values in the process of functioning as part of *the imagined community*. This was a situation to which could be applied Anderson's claim that '*the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship*'. (Anderson, 1991: 16). On the other hand, during the discursive reconstruction of *Englishness* from the mid-1950s onwards, when the large numbers of

‘black’ immigrants arrived, the political and educational responses of the state reflected that this ‘biological organism’ analogy was not applied to them. According to Robert Miles and Annie Phizacklea, these immigrants ‘were... always “black” or “coloured” before they were workers, neighbours, mothers, trade unionists, or even just people’. (Miles and Phizacklea, 1984: 12).

### **1.3. The construction of ‘English’ in the early twentieth century.**

English was regarded as one of the cultural tools to boost the ‘advanced teaching and research in science and other fields of “modern” study, especially as applied to industrial organisation and technological development.’ (Dodd, 1986: 89). The 1910 Circular directed that English should be a discipline in its own right in all schools and universities. In this reconstruction of *Englishness* the study of English in school superseded that of the classics. English as a discipline in state schools and the University Extension institutions provided a cultural tool, which should have facilitated members of the working-class to participate in the programmes aimed at ‘national efficiency’. (Simon, 1965: 175). (Dodd, 1986: 90).

The promotion of English Studies was central to the role of the English Association which was responsible for the Newbolt Report of 1921. This Report represented the belief that a liberal education founded on English would link ‘together the mental life of all the classes’. (Steele, 1997: 95).

English came to signify a sense of *Englishness*, according to Dodd (1986: 111). Anderson’s idea of *the imagined community* being a linguistically homogeneous one is applicable to the English situation. (Anderson, 1990: 16). It could be interpreted that the absence of



proficiency in English later formed the basis of a strategy used by the state to mark the exclusion of 'black' immigrants from being 'of' *the imagined community*.

#### **1.4. The Reconstruction of Education outside the classroom**

Pictorial displays at exhibitions, galleries and events in other public spaces form part of educational discourses. Take for example, the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. The theme of Empire permeated the exhibition. A programme of study was included in *The Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study* in order to help the visiting school children to learn about the Empire. As an educational discourse the exhibition served to celebrate the country's achievements as a global power. For example, the engineering sectional catalogue described the stand set up by James Booth & Co. (1915) Ltd. Displays of brass and copper tubes for pressure gauges were set up by Vickers Limited. (*Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study*, 1924: 21).

Lessons in the virtues of patriotism, courage, integrity and manliness were learnt from such exhibitions. According to Hobsbawm, these characteristic virtues were 'invented traditions', which signified *Englishness*. (Hobsbawm, 1983: 13). *The Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study* also helped to portray this picture and to promote the reconstruction of *Englishness* through visual means. Part of the 'mission of education' was to mediate *Englishness* in a period of uncertainty about English national identity. The country had just emerged from the sufferings of the First World War. That was the positive side of such educational discourse.

The graphic presentation of Empire also acted as political discourse to reconstruct *Englishness* by promoting the ideology of white homogeneity. This was the negative side of such discourse, which included associated school texts. It formed racialised discourse in

which the 'black' population of the countries of the empire were presented by way of stereotypes. For example, the natives were seen as 'ugly', 'child peoples', and 'disliking manual work'. The process of racialisation is endemic to the political discourse used to mediate *Englishness*. Miles explained the process of racialisation as the practice whereby a group is defined as a 'race' and given a 'group identity' by another group. (Miles, 1989: 6). The interplay of racism and English nationalism facilitated the identification of who was a member of the English race and who was *The Other*. This identification of *The Other* was not unlike the construction of *Orientalism* to set the English race apart from the peoples of the Orient. (Said, 2003: 22).

### **1.5. Why was it necessary to reconstruct *Englishness* between the 1950s and the 1960s?**

"...the changing nature of a community" was at the heart of the Parliamentary Debates in the 1950s and 1960s aimed at controlling 'black' immigration through legislation. The permanent presence of 'black' immigrants in that period was regarded by the state as a threat to the *imagined community* from 'within and without'. This negative image of these immigrants generated the process of racialisation. 1958 marked the racial riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill. It was significant in that it kept 'black' immigrants in 'the gaze' of the state. According to Foucault, modern society can be compared with Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" design for prisons. In the Panopticon a single guard can watch over several prisoners while he remains unseen. (Foucault, 1977: 138). When Martin Lindsay seconded the Motion made by Cyril Osborne in 1958, he made the point that the numbers of the 'black' immigrants would escalate from the current 200,000. He was troubled, not only by the future growth of numbers, but also by the likelihood of a multi-racial community: 'We *must ask*

*ourselves to what extent we want Great Britain to become a multi-racial community’.*

(Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, vol. 596, cols. 1579- 80, 5 December 1958).

According to Zig Layton-Henry, there was no government policy to control the arrival of Irish immigrants into the country. The reasons taken into account were that they were white and that Ireland was ‘an integral part of the United Kingdom’. (Layton-Henry, 1992: 4-5). The ‘biological organism’ analogy could be applied to this situation as regards the acceptability of the Irish immigrants. Support for this view can be found in the speech of John Hall, the Conservative MP for Wycombe, during the parliamentary debate on the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. His observation was that: “*People from Europe or near European stock are not so easily identifiable.*” (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 813 (1970- 71) HMSO, cols. 42- 45. The next section explores the continuity of the process of racialisation through to the ‘New Racism’ and the 1980s.

#### **1.6. The Discursive Reconstruction of *Englishness* through the ideology of the ‘New Racism’.**

*“We have in our nature a tendency to form exclusive groups. These are our strengths; without them, we would in fact hardly be human. It is in our biology, our instincts, to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders - not because they are inferior, but because they are part of different cultures.”* (Barker, 1981: 22).

My contention is that ‘this philosophy’, which Michael Barker claims to be new, is really a continuation of the interdependence of the ideologies of racism and English nationalism.

Robert Miles concluded that *‘ideologies of racism and nationalism can be interdependent and overlapping, the idea of ‘race’ serving simultaneously as a criterion of exclusion/inclusion so*

*that the boundary of the claimed 'nation' is equally a boundary of 'race'.* (Miles, 1950; 41).

The exclusion of 'black' immigrants represented the continued contextualization of *the imagined community*. The language of the 'New Racism' reveals this practice of contextualisation. For example, such terms as 'outsiders', 'different cultures', 'defend our way of life' can be interpreted as another way of framing the racial element in the policy of assimilation in 1964. (Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council, 1964. 7, para. 10). The policy document established that 'black' immigrants, including children born in England, were required to abandon their culture, traditions and values in favour of the English 'way of life'. This approach was also evident in Mrs. Thatcher's television interview on Granada's *World in Action* Programme on 30th January 1978. She stated that she was in sympathy with those who felt 'really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture'. (Verbatim report of an interview with Gordon Burns, given by Mrs. Thatcher on Monday 30 January 1978. Extract by courtesy of *World in Action*, Granada Television. There was no mention of the words 'race' or 'black', but the image of the 'black' immigrants was easily created in the minds of the white population who had 'fears of numbers'. This populist tone, which reached out to the mainstream society, was also evident in her 1982 Cheltenham speech to boost the Falklands War. She emphasised that the purpose of the Falklands War was to defend the English people and English territory against 'outsiders'. (Speech to the Conservative Rally at Cheltenham, 3 July, 1982: p. 2.) (Thatcher Archive: CCOPR 486/82).

## **Conclusion**

Parliamentary debates offer a comprehensive source of material that can be analysed to show how the state reconstructed *Englishness* in order to exclude 'black' immigrant settlers and

their children from mainstream society. For example, Robert Moyle, MP for Lewisham, spoke of the rapidly growing number of ‘immigrant children’ whose permanent presence would alter ‘the character of education’. He went on to indicate that the school’s traditional role of educating ‘British children for the British way of life’ was disrupted by the process of educating children, ‘many of whom cannot speak the language’. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 759 (1967- 68) HMSO, col. 1314). Consider the phrases ‘British way of life’ and ‘the character of education’. They produce a picture of *Englishness*. The contrasting image of the ‘outsiders’ is evident in such phrases as ‘immigrant children’ and ‘cannot speak the language.’ I have used this example to show how the parliamentary debates recorded in Hansards can be used as an effective tool in analysing the process of racialisation.

In this chapter it was argued that the chronological approach showed when *Englishness* was constructed through education. The reconstruction of *Englishness* from the mid-1950s aimed at excluding ‘black’ immigrants and their children. Analysis of the racialisation process within the framework of *the imagined community* provided a new way of researching and writing about the experiences of ‘black’ children in the history of education.

The next chapter explores the role of parliament in creating a ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ immigrant settlers.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **'Black' Immigrant Settlement from the Mid-1950s Onwards.**

#### **2. 1. Parliament as a site for the discursive construction of an identity for the 'black' immigrants: 1950s - 1960s.**

*"The story of the Island race - decent, tolerant and homogeneously white - that still informs so much political discourse, social memory and cultural production can help explain in a rational and reasoned way so many of the social attitudes that are usually ascribed to habit or instinct." (Myers, 2004: 139).*

Chapter two will now focus on the fact that society does not remain static. The state, however, wanted English society to remain that way: '*...the Island race... homogeneously white*'. The state was committed to preserving *the imagined community*. For example, as early as 1948, shortly after the arrival of *The Empire Windrush* with 'black' immigrants, eleven Labour members of Parliament sent a letter to Clement Atlee, the Prime Minister. They called for the control of 'black' immigration, since:

*"An influx of coloured people domiciled here is likely to impair the harmony, strength and cohesion of our public and social life and to cause discord and unhappiness among all concerned." (HO 213/244, J. Murray et al to Prime Minister, 22 June 1948).*

*Under the Conservative Government in 1951 other political discourse reflected the commitment to preserve the imagined community. The Marquis of Salisbury, Lord President of the Council, emphasised his fears of the 'black' threat in his speech to the Cabinet:*

*“It is not for me merely a question of whether criminal Negroes should be allowed in or not; it is a question of whether great quantities of Negroes, criminal or not, should be allowed to come.”* (CAB 124/1191, Marquis of Salisbury, 8 August 1954) (Cited in James, W. et al 1993: 65).

Not all immigration composed of peoples who conformed to an Anglo-Saxon or European description. How was *the imagined community* to be preserved? Two institutions - Parliament and the school - were the sites through which the mechanisms of political and educational discourses were used by the state to reconstruct *Englishness*. The term *Englishness* is preferred to *Britishness*. It denotes that *the imagined community* maintains the white homogeneity of the ‘*Island race*’.

The mechanism used in this chapter was the interplay of English nationalism and racism in parliamentary debates, which showed the different stages of the arguments for ‘black’ immigration control through legislation. The state had to construct an identity for the ‘black’ immigrants and their children, which separated them from the collective English national identity. According to Kundnanai, ‘the end of the Empire in the 1960s introduced a ‘new racism’ into the structure of the state, through immigration laws that implicitly defined Britain as white’. (Kundnanai, 2007: 21-22). The construction process could be said to have been influenced by the concept of ‘determinism’. Syer defines ‘determinism’ as ‘a belief in the inevitability of causal processes... If one’s parents are black, the racist will assume one’s character, intelligence, food preferences and aptitudes for particular kinds of work are inevitably pre-determined’. (Syer, 1982: 92). It is important to note how the Irish immigrants were integrated into mainstream society through the application of the ‘biological organism’ analogy. Another case in point is the situation highlighted by the Mr. Fisher, Conservative MP for Surbiton, during the Second Reading of the Commonwealth Immigration Bill in 1961.

He concluded: *“I am afraid that the reason for the Bill is the coloured immigration, and in our hearts, on both sides of the House, we know that perfectly well.”* (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 16 November 1961, col. 779).

The first stage that emerges from the parliamentary debates in the 1950s is the consensus that ‘black’ immigrants had a right of entry and settlement under the 1948 Act. The next stage shows that this consensus is replaced by a political response that reflected the fear that the permanent settlement of ‘black’ immigrants posed a threat to English national identity.

Parliamentary debates established a consensus that ‘black’ immigrants had the right of entry and settlement under the British Nationality Act 1948:

*“...the expression “British subject” and the expression “Commonwealth citizen” shall have the same meaning.”* (British Nationality Act, 1948, 1 (1), (2)).

The (Conservative) Shadow Home Secretary, Sir Maxwell Fyfe, later to become Lord Kilmuir supported the parliamentary view on the right of entry and settlement under the 1948 Act:

*“We must maintain our great metropolitan tradition of hospitality to everyone, from every part of the Empire.”* (Foot, 1969). (Cited in Tierney, 1982: 78).

This ‘great metropolitan tradition’ was also alluded to by Lord Colyton in the House of Lords:

*“We still take pride in the fact that a man can say Civis Britannicus Sum whatever his colour may be and we take pride in the fact that he wants to and can come to the Mother Country.”*  
(Foot, 1969). (Cited in Tierney, 1982: 78).



The *Civis Britannicus Sum* attitude was reinforced in the countries of the Empire, notably in the West Indies. Here children were taught to look to Britain as the Mother Country. This was the position in 1948 when the *Empire Windrush* arrived in England with 492 immigrants from Jamaica. The state, through The Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962, changed its status from being The Mother Country to being the ‘host’ country. However, the ‘black’ immigrant settlers held on to the affinity with the Mother Country.

Parliamentary debates were used to create an identity for ‘black’ immigrants as one aspect of the political response to their permanent settlement in England.

*“...Immigrants from the Commonwealth countries, though remaining British subjects under British nationality law, would be debarred from entering (and settling in) Britain except as and when required by the British economy...”* (Sivanandan, 1983: 107-108).

There had to be a solution to ‘the ‘black’ settler immigration’ situation. This was the key to resolving the anomaly of the multi-racial nationality created by the British Nationality Act 1948. According to Sivanandan, ‘in terms of British nationality law, a British citizen was not completely a British citizen when he was a black British citizen’. This situation then is interpreted to mean that ‘formal links with the Commonwealth would be maintained, but the right of individual citizens to automatic entry and settlement would be denied’. (Sivanandan, 1983: 108).

The consensus that ‘black’ immigrants had the right of entry and settlement under the 1948 Act was superseded by arguments for legislative control of ‘black’ immigration. However, the real target was ‘black’ settler immigration. The state used the process of racialisation to create an identity that set these immigrants apart from white immigrant settlers. For example,

as early as 1953 the Conservative Party set up a working party on “Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK.” The published report of that year reflected the practice of stereotyping such peoples. (CO 1028/22, Draft Report of Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the United Kingdom, 28 October 1953) (Cited in Green and Carter, 1975: 19). This form of stereotyping is an example of how ‘determinism’ works. In this way ‘determinism’ acts as a device to facilitate the creation of ‘group identity’ with the characteristics that denote a departure from the norm. The norm in this case was embodied in the characteristics of the English ‘race’.

Another aspect of the functioning of the process of racialisation was to emphasise a link between the growing numbers of ‘black’ immigrants and crime. Statistics on criminality were presented as emanating from increasing numbers of these immigrants settling in such areas as London and Birmingham. For example, questions were asked during Parliamentary debates that reflected the undesirability of ‘black’ immigrants on the grounds of a ‘racial’ propensity to criminality. A case in point occurred in the House of Commons in November 1954. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alex Lennox-Boyd, was asked by Sir Jocelyn Lucas ‘what machinery exists to ascertain the proportion of Jamaican immigrants who have police or criminal records’. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, vol. 532, 3 November 1954). Another device was to use language to set the ‘black’ population apart. For example, Parliamentary debates contain such terms as ‘immigrant areas’, ‘immigrant births’ and ‘immigrant children’. Another example showing how undesirable was the presence of ‘black’ immigrant settlers can be seen in the link that was made between them and poverty. A case in point was when Cyril Osborne, MP for Louth, made the connection in his speech in parliament on 16 November 1961: *‘In my opinion, had they faces as white as snow, their*

*great numbers and their great poverty would have made control of their coming into this country inevitable.*' (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, col. 721, 16 November).

Another aspect of the construction of the identity of the 'black' immigrants was to blame them with causing the growth of ghettos in cities such as London and Birmingham. The social implications of such ghettos formed the subject matter of political discourse. For example, the tenet of a letter written to *The Times* in 1960 by Harold Gurden, Conservative MP for Birmingham, Selly Oak, reflected the need to keep out 'black' immigrants. They were seen as the sources of 'squalor' and 'overcrowding' in the city. (13 December, p.13). During the Second Reading of the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill 1961, Gurden used the 'social process argument'. The language of his speech gave the impression that the blame for the 'worsening' of the housing problem lay with the 'black' immigrant settlers. Terms such as 'aggravated', 'hundreds', 'thousands' are aimed at magnifying the undesirable conditions. Legislation is then made acceptable as a common-sense solution. This was an example of the '*so-called common-sense attitude towards national identity*'. (Myers, 2004: 139).

In the case of Gordon Walker, MP for Smethwick, he used the 'numbers argument' to support the undesirability of the formation of ghettos. During the Second Reading of the Commonwealth Immigration Bill in November 1961 he argued for trying to 'get at what is the real problem and the remedies for it'. One of the problems he recognised was what he described as 'the clotting of the immigrant population, it gathering together in smallish areas of poor housing and high unemployment'. According to the latest figures that he had obtained, the position was that '40% of the coloured immigrants in this country live in London, 30% in the West Midlands and 3% in Scotland'. However, he felt that the situation was worse than the figures showed because 'the immigrants are concentrated in small areas

within larger conurbations like London and the West Midlands'. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 16 November 1961, col. 714).

## **2.2. Political discourse, which targeted 'black' settler immigration**

*"Regulatory instruments of the state...made racism... respectable."* (Sivanandan, 1983: 12).

The Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 had been preceded with parliamentary debates for and against the control of 'black' immigration through legislation. Both primary and secondary 'black' immigration were highlighted since the one led to the other. Justification was sought in the philosophy that 'fewer blacks make for better race relations'. (Sivanandan, 1983: 135). This belief could even be extended to mean that repatriation would result in lessening the 'black' population even further. The admission of 'black' immigrants for settlement was controlled by a system of vouchers under the 1962 Act. The relationship between these immigrants and England had been altered by the 1962 Act. In the eyes of the state, England was no longer The Mother Country, but was now the 'host' country. Within this changed relationship the idea of repatriation was not out of place, if the government wished to apply it to these immigrants. The *A vouchers* were available to those who had jobs to come to; those who had skills and qualifications 'likely to be useful in this country' were granted *B vouchers*. The skilled and professional 'black' immigrants were increasingly issued with employment vouchers. For example, of the 3,976 *B vouchers* issued in India in 1966, 1,511 went to doctors, 922 to technology graduates, 667 to teachers and 469 to science graduates (and 407 to others). (Sivanandan, 1983: 109). The status of the 'black' immigrant settlers was changed to that of contract workers.

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 was preceded by a series of debates. Jim Callaghan, Home Secretary, commended the Bill to the House. The tone of his argument played down the racial element in it. The Act had been brought about to curb both the numbers of 'black' immigration settlers, this time from Kenya, and the clamour of the press and pressure groups within the population. The British Government had given an undertaking to the Kenyan Government at the time of Kenyan independence that those Kenyan residents who chose to retain British Passports could do so. Now they were taking up their right to enter and settle in Britain. During the course of the debate, the speech of Mr. Quinton Hogg, for the Conservatives, reflected the threat of disruption of the 'homogeneously white' society that the continuous settlement of 'black' immigrants represented. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 759 (1967-68) HMSO, col.1314).

The state sought to solve the 'black' immigrant settler question through parliamentary debates and the 1962 and 1968 Acts. However, it was through the Immigration Act 1971 that the state fundamentally changed the situation. The intervention of the state during the 1960s and the early 1970s in order to re-determine who had the right to live here had effectively legitimated racism. (Miles, 1950: 37). The introduction of the concept of 'patriality' in the 1971 Immigration Act confirms this point. The key definition of 'patrial' meant those who held United Kingdom passports, who were born in the United Kingdom or who had at least one parent or grandparent born here. Only 'patrials' had 'the right to come and go free of control. 'Non-patrials' needed permission to enter. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 813 (1970-71) HMSO, cols, 91-92). John Hunt, MP for Bromley, pointed out the racial element in this Act when he said in his speech that whether the words 'New Commonwealth' or 'non-patrial' were used, the people who were really being referred to

were those ‘*born with black or brown faces*’. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 813 (1970-71) HMSO, cols. 91-93).

The determining factors that linked primary and secondary immigration in relation to the ‘patriality’ concept in the 1971 Act were the descriptors of ‘immigrant’ and ‘black’. If a ‘black’ child was born in England after 1971, he or she did not fit the ‘patriality’ rule. Such a child would be included in the ‘immigrant-descended population’ to which Enoch Powell referred here.

*“We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation, to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre.”* (Enoch Powell quoted in Smithies et al, 1969: 35-430).

The language in Enoch Powell’s speech had the same message as that of the parliamentary debates aimed at controlling ‘black’ immigration settlement. The ‘numbers argument’ is reflected in such terms as ‘annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants’. A case in point is the wording of the parliamentary speech of Cyril Osborne, MP for Louth, in November 1961. He was of the opinion, as stated earlier, that even if the immigrant settlers had been white ‘their great numbers and their great poverty’ would have been motivation for the state to control their entry into the country. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, col. 721, 16 November). The message in Enoch Powell’s speeches was the same as that contained in Cyril Osborne’s speech. The difference was that Powell’s speeches openly contained a racial element. The political agitation that was generated by his above-mentioned speech highlighted the arrival of ‘black’ immigrants’ dependants, despite the 1962 Act. There had been an increase in the numbers of women and children who joined the fathers of families.

Enoch Powell's strong disapproval reflected a crucial element in his philosophy, namely, that he perceived the ideal nation to be a homogeneous whole.

The Conservative Government under Edward Heath targeted primary and secondary 'black' immigrant settlers under the Immigration Act 1971. The anomaly of multi-racial nationality under the 1948 Act was totally erased. The concept of 'patriality' was interpreted to mean that 'patrials' were white Commonwealth citizens. They alone had the right of entry and settlement. According to Sivanandan, the term 'patrials' was 'Callaghan's euphemism for white Commonwealth citizens'. (Sivanandan, 1983: 27). The 'patriality' principle reflected the legitimisation of the process of racialisation. It also continued the justification for not applying the 'biological organism' analogy to the 'black' immigrant population through generations.

Entry certificates governed the position of secondary 'black' immigrant settlement. These were issued at the discretion of the British authorities in the countries of origin. The dependants had to prove their eligibility as regards age, dependency and relationship to the relative in Britain. The proof had to be by way of written documentation. (Holmes, 1988: 67). Children had to be over 18 to be eligible. Parents had to be age 65 to qualify. The immigration officer at the port of entry had the power to refuse entry into Britain. Some of the grounds for refusal included 'false representations' being made or 'material facts' being concealed, '*whether or not to the holder's knowledge*', for the purpose of gaining entry clearance (Sivanandan, 1983: 27).

Repatriation would appear to be applicable to 'black' children born in England as well as those came in to join their families. 'Black' children born here were classified as 'black'

immigrants. This classification paved the way for the state to continue the practice of stereotyping 'black' youngsters. A case in point was the device of linking crime with race. According to Robert Miles, political attention increasingly targeted the children of 'black' immigrants, most of whom were born here. They were alleged to have been involved in street crime. 'Mugging' was the particular one that was associated with this group. (Miles *et al*, 1984: 86). The Press took up the banner of what could be interpreted as deterministic thinking. The connection was made between 'black' immigrant areas/ghettoes/ race/crime. An instance of this was the description in *The Daily Mail*:

*"All the sentenced youths are either coloured or immigrants and live in one of Birmingham's major problem areas. Police and social workers have been battling for five years to solve community problems in Handsworth, where juvenile crime steadily worsens and there are continuous complaints about the relationship between the police and the predominantly coloured public."* (*Daily Mail*, 21 March 1973) (Cited in Miles et al, 1984: 86- 87).

The idea of repatriation was popularised by such deterministic thinking.

The next section explores the continuation of the interplay between racism and English nationalism in the form of the 'New Racism'.

### **2.3. The Discursive Reconstruction of *Englishness* through the ideology of the 'New Racism'**

Martin Barker claimed the 'New Racism' was a 'new *Tory theory of race*', which offered '*philosophy and a politics of common-sense...*' (Barker, 1981: 22). My contention is that this theory is a continuation of the interdependence of the ideologies of racism and English nationalism. This interdependence is central to the application of Anderson's concept of *the*



*imagined community* to the English situation. According to Robert Miles, ‘ideologies of racism and nationalism can be interdependent and overlapping, the idea of ‘race’ serving simultaneously as a criterion of exclusion/inclusion so that the boundary of claimed ‘nation’ is equally a boundary of ‘race’. (Miles, 1950: 41). Bearing in mind that ‘determinism’ helps to justify a ‘group identity’, it is important to note the language of the philosophy of the ‘New Racism’. For example, it promotes the idea that ‘*It is in our biology, our instincts, to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders-not because they are inferior, but because they are part of different cultures.*’ (Barker, 1981: 22). The message can be interpreted to mean that there is a national commitment to preserve *Englishness* for the English. Those excluded were the ‘black’ immigrants. The image of rejection was painted by the views of West Indians living in Handsworth, Birmingham in 1986. Their grievances were printed in a report known as ‘A Different Reality’ in 1986. The materiality of their experiences gives a graphic image of the continuity of their exclusion from mainstream society. For example, these are some of the grievances:

*“The housing is terrible - this is one of the major things. Ever since birth Black people have been put in bad areas. Our preferences are ignored.”* (A Different Reality, 1986: 23).

My argument is that the tenet of the ‘New Racism’ runs through the educational and political response to ‘black’ immigrant settlement from the mid-1950s onwards. In other words, the philosophy of the ‘New Racism’ is not new. It represents the re-inscription of the inter-dependence of racism and English nationalism, which is endemic to *the imagined community*. According to Robert Miles:

*“Traditions are invented to create a sense of historical continuity. This requires that events and material artefacts from the past are selected for attention and made relevant to the*

*present and the future. In the case of English nationalism, the events selected include those which evince a sense of external threat over which 'the English people' triumph...*" (Miles, 1950: 39).

In my argument, the event and circumstances that demonstrate this view is that of 'black' immigration settlement from the mid-1950s onwards. That was the threat from 'without' and 'within'. The language of the discursive reconstruction of *Englishness* reflects the 'collective existence' that has been threatened. Such terms as 'the white man' in the speeches of Enoch Powell demonstrate this point. The interplay of racism and English nationalism is reflected in the speeches of Enoch Powell, which struck a note with the 'Englishman' in the wider society. In his speech of 20<sup>th</sup> April 1968, the line that runs 'the black man will have the whip hand over the white man' would have created a graphic image in the minds of the local and national public that 'black' immigrant settlement was a threat to *Englishness*.

This populist tone was evident in Mrs. Thatcher's television interview on Granada's *World in Action Programme* on 30 January 1978. In her reply to a question about immigration she asserted that it was too high. She emphasised this view by stating that she was in sympathy with those who felt 'really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture'. (Verbatim report of an interview with Gordon Burns, given by Mrs. Thatcher on Monday 30 January 1978. Extract by courtesy of *World in Action*, Granada Television). The statement is well known for the emotive language represented by such words as 'swamped' and 'people with a different culture'. Mrs. Thatcher, through the 'New Racism', would exploit 'race' to infuse the people with a sense of 'national identity and patriotism and to create the climate in which the Tories would appear the sole defenders of the

nation’. (Murray, 1986: 3). Fairclough suggested that the use of the pronouns *we* and *you* provide ‘textual evidence’ for this argument. (Fairclough, 1989: 179).

This undertone of the interdependence of racism and English nationalism can be read into the British Nationality Act 1981. Support for this view can be gleaned from an investigation by Robert Miles. He concluded that the Conservative government had shaped the 1981 Act on the idea of ‘race’. The government had thus ‘brought nationality law into line with the racist categories, constructed in earlier immigration law and immigration rules’. (Miles, 1990:39). The exclusive nature of English national identity, which is reflected in the 1971 and the 1981 Acts, provides support for the argument that the ‘biological organism’ analogy was never applied to ‘black’ immigrants. On the other hand, this analogy was applied to the people of the Falkland Islands. Consider the language in Mrs. Thatcher’s speech to the Conservative Rally at Cheltenham in 1982:

*“British people had to be threatened by foreign soldiers and British territory invaded and then – why then - the response was incomparable. Yet why does it need a war to bring out our qualities and reassert our pride?”* (Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Thatcher Archive: CCOPR 486/82).

This was a concrete situation that showed the ‘way of life’ that was endemic to *the imagined community*. This speech also provided an example of the application of ‘the biological organism’ analogy to the Falkland Islands and the inhabitants: the people of the Falkland Islands are part of *the imagined community*.

## **Conclusion**

The argument that was presented in Chapter two showed the reality of how ‘black’ immigrant settlers from the mid-1950s were treated by the state as a threat to white homogeneity. The state is presented in this chapter as being committed to preserving *the imagined community* through the institutions of parliament and the school system. According to Mukherjee, ‘The reasons for Britain’s decline are complex, but at the heart of them is the refusal to recognise the consequences of Empire and its decline’. (Mukherjee, 1998: 224). One of those consequences was ‘black’ immigrant settlement.

Chapter three takes the process of racialisation into the state school system. Here the key mechanism of schooling formed the nucleus of the discursive reconstruction of *the imagined community*.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **The School As A Site for the Reconstruction of *The Imagined Community***

#### **3. 1. The discursive construction of an identity for ‘black’ pupils through the mechanism of schooling from the mid-1950s onwards.**

Schooling is here interpreted to mean the materiality of the school culture to which ‘black’ pupils were exposed in the state school system. The argument here is that the educational discourse that represented schooling was used by the school system to create a ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ pupils in order to set them apart from *the imagined community* as defined and described earlier in this study. The components of schooling that are explored in this section of the chapter are assimilation, integration, multiculturalism and dispersal. Sections 2, 3 and 4 will explore other aspects of schooling, such as the requirement for proficiency of English, curriculum option choices, *cultural capital*, the Educationally Subnormal programme, teachers’ low expectation as regards ‘black’ pupils, and the construction of teacher identity, which symbolized white homogeneity.

Chapter three now puts into perspective the racialisation process, which focused on ‘black’ pupils in the state school system from the mid-1950s onwards.

Consider the language of the assimilation policy embodied in the second report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council (CIAC - Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council 1964, 7, para. 10). At face value this discourse appears to be de-racialised.

According to Frank Reeves, de-racialised discourse involves deliberately couching the racial

element in the language used. (Reeves, 1983: 177). A closer look at such expressions as 'another culture and another tradition' reveal the fact that 'black' immigrants were foreigners and had to be re-socialised. They were expected to give up their cultural practices in order to fit in. Such terms as '...but a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of immigrant groups' reflect the same tone of 'common sense racism' as that which characterised the ideology of the 'New Racism'. (Barker, 1981:22). The element of difference came down to the fact that the colour of their skin was black. According to Green and Grosvenor, '...Difference... in the end, was a matter of skin colour.' (Green and Grosvenor, 1997: 894). The school was one of the sites that had the role of reconstructing *the imagined community* in the face of the permanent settlement of these immigrants. It is also my argument that the thinking behind the assimilation ideology was influenced by 'determinism'. According to Syer, 'deterministic' belief works on 'the inevitability of causal processes'. (Syer, 1982:86). For example, such phrases as 'the different values of immigrant groups' reflect this connection; because they are 'black' and their traditions are different they will remain as 'outsiders' through generations.

The next phase of the programme of re-socialisation of the 'black' pupils was influenced by the integration ideology. According to the definition given by Roy Jenkins, Labour Home Secretary and Birmingham MP, there was a shift in emphasis in policy. He outlined that integration was 'not a flattening process of assimilation, but an equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'. (Cited in Patterson, 1969: 113). However, integration did not take the assimilation process any further. The difference between the two concepts was in degree rather than kind. For example, the framework of the integration policy provided some space for the first time, albeit limited, for

the concept of multiculturalism. The line that suggests this leeway is that of ‘an equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance’.

The 1975 Bullock Report emphasised that ‘no child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold’. (Department of Education and Science, *A language for life* (Bullock Report), 1975: 453) In the 1970s, local authorities such as the Inner London Education Authority issued policy statements that promoted a ‘cultural pluralist perspective’ (Steele, 1997:121). The school curricula were supposed to reflect a positive ‘commitment to difference and to the preservation of group culture, traditions and history’. (Mullard, 1981: 29). However, in practice, the programmes were short-lived, mainly because the political agenda was no different from that which was attached to the ideologies of assimilation and integration. These projects could be interpreted as attempts on the part of the state to accept ‘black’ immigrant settlers as part of the mainstream. However, when one looks at the aims of the 1971 Act with its concept of ‘patriality’ one can see the commitment of the state was still to preserve *Englishness*. Another factor that renders multicultural programmes false was the fact that ‘black’ teachers who were employed for the programme ‘were met with racism and were marginalised’. (Human, 1995). (Cited by Steele, 1997:122). The emptiness of the multicultural programmes become evident by recalling the fact that England was then the ‘host’ country and that ‘difference’ in culture really meant that the pupils were ‘black’. According to Mullard, ‘Without a radical reappraisal of multiracial education theory and practice, our society’s materialist and racist culture will continue to be transmitted by all schools’. (Mullard, 1982: 131).

The fact that the ‘numbers argument’ and ‘white hostility influenced educational policy’ is reflected in the following statement in Circular 7/75.

*“The proportion of immigrant children in any one school should not be unduly high.”* (DES, The Education of Immigrants, Circular 7/65, 14 June 1965.)

‘Black’ pupils were constructed as ‘the threat, threatening to disrupt the education progress of white pupils.’ (Carby, 1982: 185). The DES Circular legitimised the dispersal of ‘black’ pupils. The tenure of the text of the Circular was that ‘serious strains’ could arise in schools if the proportion of ‘black’ children in any one school rose above one-third. This was the principle behind the ‘Plimsoll Mark’. The strategy here was to appease white parents. Such parents were likely to protest at what they regarded as the ‘taking over’ of their school by ‘outsiders’. The above-mentioned extract from Circular 7/65 reflected the same fears voiced by Sir Edward Boyle, Minister for Education in 1963: *“I must regretfully tell the House that one school must be regarded now as irretrievably an immigrant school. The important thing to do is prevent this happening elsewhere.”* (Cited in Jones, C & Kimberley K. 1982: 137. ).

This report to Parliament in 1963 could be regarded as part of the racialisation process aimed at ‘black’ immigrant settlers in the wider society. This approach suggested that he was committed to preventing the continuation of large concentrations of ‘black’ immigrant pupils in other schools. It is worth noting that Circular 7/65 was structured to show the state’s readiness to listen to the concerns of the parents of non-immigrant children. However, they failed to consult the ‘black’ parents. According to Troyna and Williams, in so doing, the LEAS did not follow the stipulation in the 1944 Education Act, which stated that children



were to be educated in accordance with parental wishes. (Troyna and Williams, 1986: 19).  
(Cited in Grosvenor, 1997: 55).

### **3.2. The requirement for proficiency of English as a mechanism of schooling**

*“No longer is one trying to produce British children for the British way of life. The whole system of education is becoming distorted in the direction of trying to accommodate children, many of whom cannot speak the language, to the British way of life.”* (Hansards, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 759 (1967-68) HMSO, col. 1314).

In this speech by Roland Moyle, MP for Lewisham, such terms as ‘British children for a British way of life’ indicate the collective English national identity, which has been fostered by education and the home. The ‘character of the education’ that was about to change had been fashioned to reproduce *Englishness*. Having the English language as one’s mother tongue was at the heart of being English. The 1910 Circular had directed that English should be studied as a discipline in its own right in state and public schools as well as in universities. (Dodd, 1986: 111).

In opposition to the above inclusive identity, ‘black’ pupils were presented by such terms as ‘immigrant children’ and ‘the whole system of education is becoming distorted’. This was an example of how the racialisation process worked. Such phrases as ‘many of whom cannot speak the language’ has no racial element. However, in the light of the role that the English language played in the collective identity of the English people, it was evident that the ‘black’ immigrant pupils had no place in the English school system.

The position of West Indian children will be highlighted in this paragraph because they were singled out to be taught English as a second language. Their mother tongue was English, but they were designated as having special needs. They did not speak Standard English. This was regarded as a sign of inferiority and backwardness. The idea of special needs in the case of West Indian children was interpreted to mean that these children had to be taught English and that their 'cultural and intellectual backwardness' had to be corrected. (National Foundation for Educational Research, *Coloured Immigrant Children: A Survey of Research, Studies and Literature on Their Educational Problems and Potential in Britain* (NFER 1966, p.173). (Cited in Carby, 1982: 187).

'Black' pupils were construed as a threat to the educational progress of the white pupils. White parents were afraid that their children would be affected by the apparent lower standards of the 'black' immigrant pupils who comprised a large proportion of the school population. (National Foundation for Educational Research, *Coloured Immigrant Children: A Survey of Research, Studies and Literature on Their Educational Problems and Potential in Britain* (NFER 1966, p.167). (Cited in Carby, (1982: 185). This was situating the popular fear of the 'black' threat in a concrete setting: schooling was being used to reconstruct *the imagined community*. 'Black' pupils were seen as not being 'of' *the imagined community*. Look again at the wording of Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966. Through this section grants were made to Local Authorities, which had in their areas very large numbers of 'immigrants from the Commonwealth' with languages or customs that differed 'from those of the community'. (Home Office, 'Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, Grant administration: policy criteria,' 1990). The offending phrase was 'of the community'. The element of exclusion was noted by Roy Hattersley, the Labour Minister for Birmingham; even though he went on to agree with the need for the grant to Local Authorities. (Hansards,

*Parliamentary Debates* (1966- 67)). Home Offices Circulars later caused the word ‘rest’ to be inserted before ‘of the community’. (Grosvenor, 1977: 93).

‘Black’ parents also fell within the range of the school’s reconstruction of *Englishness*. For example, West Indian parents were regarded as having ‘unrealistic vocational ambitions’. (Green & Grosvenor, 1997:896). This view of West Indian parents could be interpreted as representing yet another cultural difference that set them apart. However, if assimilation was to be seen to be effective, it was necessary to get the co-operation of ‘black’ parents on the side of the school. The way to achieve this was the exercise of hegemony. According to Gramsci, state control needed the consent of the polity through hegemony in order to sustain that control over a period of time (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2003: 71). In the case of the West Indian parents, it was obvious that they wanted their children to gain opportunities by attending school and learning through the system. It made sense for the parents to consent to their children being taught Standard English in special groups.

### **3.3. Legitimation of educational inequalities which created an identity for ‘black’ immigrant pupils.**

*“Thus the one way to ensure no changes in the social hierarchy and abundant unskilled labour is to adopt and adapt the educational system to meet the needs of the situation: to prepare our children for the society’s future unskilled and ill-paid jobs. It is in this perspective that we can come to appreciate why so many of our ‘black’ children are being dumped in E.S.N. schools, secondary moderns, the lowest streams of the comprehensive schools, and ‘Bussed’ and ‘Banded’ about the school system.”* (Coard, 1971: 35).

*“...We were streamed and I was in the middle stream. There were more ‘black’ kids in the lower streams...”* (Interview with John Taylor, 25 March 1994) (Chessum, 2000: 167).

*“...Afro-Caribbean students were also found to be denied educational opportunities as a consequence of the adverse relationship between them and their teachers, stemmed from what was to be found to be their teachers’ faulty assessment of their abilities and achievement.”*

(Wright, 1987: 123).

These extracts speak for themselves and are also corroborative of one another. John Taylor was a ‘black’ pupil at Moat Boys School in Leicester in 1962. His interview by Chessum revealed his personal experience. Streaming of ‘black’ pupils represented another aspect of the racialisation of ‘black’ immigrant pupils. Edith Drew’s interview by Chessum revealed another part of that process. She attended Moat Girls’ School in the 1960s in Leicester. She claimed that ‘West Indian children were seen as dunces who didn’t know anything’.

(Chessum, 2000: 166). This claim is reflected in that made by Bernard Coard that ‘black’ children were ‘dumped’ in schools for Educationally Subnormal children and the ‘lowest streams of comprehensive schools...’

Cecile Wright’s ethnographical findings in 1987 emphasised that teachers’ ‘faulty assessment’ of ‘black’ pupils’ abilities and achievements, especially those of West Indians, resulted from the confrontational relationship that often existed between the teachers and such pupils. The subjective judgement that guided the misplacement of such pupils is corroborated in the comment of one of the teachers in one of the schools where a West Indian girl was assigned to a CSE set rather than to a GCE ‘O’ level examination set. She referred to the fact that the girl had been ‘on the fringe of trouble all year’ and that her attitude to the teachers was ‘not good.’ (Wright, 1987: 125). Sally Tomlinson highlighted how West Indians pupils were channelled into CSE programmes. (Tomlinson, 1987: 93).

My argument in this section is relevant to the overarching framework of this chapter, namely, that the school mediated *Englishness* through the mechanism of schooling. If the school is seen as a reconstruction of *the imagined community*, then it becomes clear that this device legitimised the racialisation process that isolated the ‘black’ pupils. As a group set apart, the school did not invest any *cultural capital* in them. The concept of *cultural capital* is associated with the principle of equality in education, which should result in the individual being given all the educational opportunities to become well qualified. Those qualifications would then be used by the individual in exchange for well-paid employment. This was how Bourdieu saw it in the light of the French situation. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1971). The next section explains how teacher identity was meant to symbolize English national identity.

#### **3.4. The discursive construction of teacher identity which symbolized white homogeneity.**

*“...The values of the system and the nation were to be symbolised within the person of the teacher. Thus, the national identity, national systems and the collective teacher were intrinsically bound together in discourse.”* (Grosvenor, 2001: 356).

The discursive construction of teacher identity was aimed at nurturing national identity among English children. The teacher and the home were expected to mediate *Englishness*. How could a ‘black’ teacher symbolize English national identity? I aim to show in this section that neither ‘black’ immigrant children nor qualified ‘black’ teachers were contemplated as being part of this collective identity.

A useful starting point is to consider that the state constructed the English collective national identity as being homogeneously white. English children and their schooling must reflect this

image. The teacher and the home are required to ensure that the children are imbued with 'values and traditions', which foster this sense of belonging to *the imagined community*. The application of the analogy of the French situation would act as corroboration here. According to Bourdieu, 'second nature instilled from childhood' is engendered in children through their experiences during schooling and home life. He describes this as 'habitus'. (Bourdieu, 1992: 66). Schooling, under the guidance of the teacher, mediated *Englishness*. This called for the construction and reconstruction of the teacher identity. An extract from Cyril Norwood's writing shows how this identity was invented. According to Grosvenor and Lawn, Cyril Norwood presented the link between 'the nation, the school and its teachers' (Grosvenor *et al.*, 2001: 360). Norwood emphasised the 'study of the nation's history' as being vital, teaching the individual 'the inherited system of morality', which determined membership of the English race. History then puts into perspective the 'values' and the traditions that go to make the person English. Education was the key vehicle through which to learn about the national history. The teacher must be able to pass this on to successive generations of the nation's children. This is done through example, and through teaching them inside the classroom and outside of it. Educational discourse such as the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in London is a case in point. Within *The Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study 1924* there was a guidance section for teachers. It listed 'the great imperial virtues' such as 'Unselfishness', 'Vision', 'Courage' and 'Integrity'. (*Bulletin*, 1924: 347).

They would learn that they belonged to the English race only. They would also be able to recognize the people who were not English. For example, in the history of the Empire they would learn that they belonged to the English nation that ruled the countries of the empire. Images of these indigenous peoples would immediately identify them as 'The Other': they were 'black' and they were the labourers. A case in point was the 1924 British Empire

Exhibition in London. These 'black' peoples were portrayed as the poor underclass in their own countries. *The Weekly Bulletin of Empire Study 1924* also represented racialised discourse, which would have influenced the minds of school children. The superiority of the white man was emphasised in such terms 'the white type is the most numerous and most progressive.' (*Bulletin*, 1924: 5).

An analogy for this portrayal of 'black' people as 'The Other' can be found in the ethnographical exhibitions set up by European countries such as Germany. For example, an 'African village' was opened in the Augsburg Zoo in 2005. Pascal Blanchard noted that these exhibitions or 'human zoos' showed 'exotic natives' for entertainment. (Blanchard *et al.*, 2000: 32).

Norwood's discourse was produced in the 1920s. This period represented the continued reconstruction of Education and the establishment of English as the national language. The 1920s can also be interpreted as reflecting the emergence of the modern working-class. According to Tom Steele 'the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was then a conjunctural moment at which three developing cultural formations converged to crystallise in what became the British settlement, namely: an established industrial working-class culture, a modernist sensibility and an articulation of *Englishness*'. (Steele, 1997: 46). This situation would have facilitated the recruitment of teachers from among the working-class. The next section explains the absence of 'black' teachers from the classroom.

The discursive construction of teacher identity excluded 'black' teachers from the classroom.

*"A system of education must aim at producing citizens who can take their place in a society*

*properly equipped to exercise rights and perform duties the same as those of other citizens.”*  
(Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council, 1964, 7, para. 10).

*“I was the first West Indian teacher in Leicester.”* (Chessum, 2000: 162)

I aim to show here that the ‘black’ teacher had no place in the process of mediating *Englishness* with regards to English pupils in English schools. Consider the language that gave direction to the assimilation ideology. The ‘system of education’ worked through the guidance of the teacher inside and outside the classroom, and that teacher had to be white. The face that represented the assimilation ideology had to be the white teacher. That way the teacher would put into effect the process whereby the ‘black’ immigrant pupils would be channelled into discarding their customs and traditions while accepting the English traditions and ‘way of life’. The white teacher would, therefore, assist with ‘gentling the masses’.  
(Jones & Kimberley, 1982). (Cited in Tierney, J. (ed.), 1982: 137).

What part did the concept of ‘determinism’ play in the justification of excluding ‘black’ teachers in the 1950’s through to the 1960s? The connection can be seen by looking back at my argument that the school was one of the sites assigned with the task of reconstructing *the imagined community* in the face of ‘black’ immigration settlement. If this is accepted, then the pattern for this process determined that it could only be effected by white teachers. It is within this framework that the viewpoint of Mukherjee is applicable. He believed that ‘black’ immigrant teachers were recruited in ‘race-cast’ roles. (Mukherjee, 1988: 213). In other words, they had nothing to offer white pupils by way of mediating *Englishness*. The ‘race-cast’ role suited the teaching of English as a second language. According to Brandt, the system of the employment of teachers reflected the perpetuation of ‘White interests, cultural



assumptions, and the racial *status quo* of “White authority and ‘black’ subordination.” (Brandt, 1986: 128) (Cited in Grosvenor, 1999: 134). Syer’s investigation into the subject of the under-representation of ‘black’ teachers on school staffs in England and Wales showed that ‘in the mid-1970s about 0.15 % of teachers, compared with 1.5 % of pupils, were of West Indian origin’. (Syer, 1982:88). According to Chessum, Clifton Robinson, a qualified Jamaican teacher, became ‘one of only a handful of ‘black’ teachers to work in Leicester schools’. (Chessum, 2000: 163). One of the reasons given by the Local Education Authority in Birmingham for not recruiting ‘black’ immigrant teachers was the problem with their spoken English. The head teacher of an infant school in Birmingham had reported to the Chief Education Officer that the ‘peculiar timbre of the Indian diction’ had ‘failed to interest or stimulate little ones’, (Birmingham Central Library, Archive Department, IE, ‘Letter to the CEO, 25 May 1967 and attached notes.’) (Cited by Grosvenor, 1999: 131). According to Chessum, the Association of Teachers of Ethnic Minorities in Leicestershire carried out a survey on the employment of ‘black’ teachers in Leicester schools in 1979. The figure showed that, from a workforce of 8,500, only 65 teachers were from ethnic minorities. (Chessum, 2000: 163).

## **Conclusion**

English society did not remain static. White immigration, including that of the Irish, did not result in the state fearing that the character of the English race would be drastically changed. ‘Black’ immigration from the mid-1950s, in reality, changed the English society. Consider the image of the influx of ‘black’ pupils in the areas of London, Birmingham and Leicester where large numbers of ‘black’ immigrants had settled. For example, ‘black’ immigrant settlers in 1966 made up 4.2 per cent of the entire population of Birmingham. (Grosvenor,

1997: 97). Statistical information from the Department of Education and Science showed that, in 1968, primary and secondary schools in Birmingham had a large percentage of ‘black’ immigrant pupils in their classes. The general figures showed 9.6 per cent in primary schools and 8.0 per cent in secondary schools. (Hill, M. J. *et al*, 1971: 48). (Cited in Grosvenor, 1997: 97). In order to resist the change in the English society the state reconstructed *the imagined community* through Parliament and the school and created a ‘black’ identity for the ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their offspring. The requirement for the proficiency of English as a mechanism in schooling would have been effective in the process of racialisation. According to V.K. Edwards, West Indian speech was regarded negatively in the wider society and by teachers in the classroom. (Edwards, 1979: 92). It is also worth noting here that the Rampton Report acknowledged in 1981 that the negative attitude towards the West Indian child’s language could produce a feeling of rejection in the child:

*“The attitude of schools and teachers towards a West Indian child’s language is of critical importance.”* (Department of Education and Science, West Indian children in our schools (Rampton), 1981)

This chapter showed the inter-relationship between the roles of the school and parliament as agents of the state in the reconstruction of *Englishness*. The next chapter will show how members of the ‘black’ population forged their self-identity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **The Mechanisms Used By The ‘Black’ Immigrant Settlers To Create a Self-Identity**

The structure of the argument in this study is aimed at providing an explanation of the experiences of ‘black’ immigrant children in the history of education in post-1945 Britain. The imagined community forms the overarching framework within which this argument is made. It is my contention that the racialised discourse used by parliament and the school reflected the application of the concept of ‘denial’. As indicated in the Introduction, Pajackowska explained the concept:

*“In order to deny knowledge of its own ruthlessness and aggression the subject has to maintain the fiction that ‘foreigners are dirty’ or that ‘black’ men are violent’.*  
(Pajackowska, 1992: 201).

My interpretation of this concept will provide a direct link between chapters two and three in the explanation of the process of racialisation. For example, in section 2.1. of chapter two, I argued that parliamentary debates were used to construct a ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ immigrant settlers. Lord Colyton’s speech in the House of Lords referred to how the city of Birmingham was being ‘swamped by ‘black’ immigrant settlers’. (Hansards, *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, col. 412, 20 November, 1956).

The discursive reconstruction of *Englishness* from the mid-1950s onwards placed ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their children outside the nation and the collective English national identity. However, it should be remembered that identities are constructed. As such they are subject to being challenged by those who have been marginalised. It is my contention in this

chapter that ‘black’ immigrants and their offspring responded to the exclusionary practices of *the imagined community*. Second and third generation of ‘black’ immigrant settlers exercised individual and collective agency in order to create self-identification. The concept of ‘agency’ can be briefly explained as a strategy used by groups such as women and ‘black’ peoples to challenge the social and political constructions of identity. An essential feature of collective or individual agency is that the members are the actors in creating self-identity. (Henze, 2000: 229). I shall first present the school as a site for the exercise of educational agency.

#### **4. 1. The school as one of the sites for the exercise of educational agency.**

*“Identities are the names we give the different ways 1) we are positioned by, and 2) we position ourselves within the narratives of the past.” (Hall, 1990: 225).*

This section will be argued within the context of both these positions. The second and third generations of ‘black’ immigrant settlers were working from a position of cultural difference. They had a narrative from which they believed they could draw courage to create their own self-identity. Their narrative springs from the experiences spanning from being colonised through to being ‘black’ immigrant labourers and then ‘black’ immigrant settlers. They thought that they were arriving in the ‘Mother Country’ to which they attached certain affinities. On the other hand, ‘the story of the Island race’ presented the image of England being ‘the host’ country to the ‘black’ immigrant settlers and not the ‘Mother Country’.

The rise of the modern working class could be interpreted as an analogy as regards the position of the ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their offspring in their effort to hold on to their culture and create their own identity. According to Steele, the working class appeared to have

constructed a decent and humane culture of their own, which denied the claims to moral superiority of the capitalist order by the early twentieth-century. This class was then identified as being ‘of’ *the imagined community* while maintaining their own culture. Steele’s interpretation of working class culture as ‘a complex of purposive activities’ aimed at self-improvement could be applied to the second and third generations of ‘black’ immigrant settlers. (Steele, 1997: 33). Their exercise of solidarity and educational agency included the establishment of supplementary schools, the rise of Black Studies, ‘Black Britishness’ movement, representations of Black Cultural Studies and the contribution of the West Indian Intellectuals. These ‘purposive activities’ represented ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their later generation positioning themselves within their narrative ‘of the past’.

The following paragraphs of this section present an image of ‘black’ boys and girls who responded to the racialised discourse of the white teachers in the classroom.

The extract below shows an image of a classroom confrontation between ‘black’ pupils and white teachers. The term ‘Afro-Caribbean’ is used in the extract to mean ‘West Indian’. However, I have used the term ‘West Indian’ in this study.

*“The Afro-Caribbean girls and boys in their conversations seemed to be expressing similar complaints and dissatisfaction regarding their teachers’ behaviour towards them. Certainly, similarities were observed in the way in which they both responded to the teachers’ treatment of them. For instance, in the classroom they were both prepared to openly confront and challenge the teacher, using Jamaican patois in their exchanges with the teacher... For the Afro-Caribbean students the use of a mode of communication outside the cultural repertoire of the teacher is intended to undermine the teacher’s authority...” (Wright, 1986: 122).*

In the context of a response to the practice of racialisation as treated in the earlier chapters, it can be seen that the joint action of the ‘black’ boys and girls represented an exercise of solidarity. An analogy can be drawn from the French situation. Doran’s investigation showed that the multi-ethnic youth living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods outside Paris were able to assert their own identity through the use of Verlan. This is a ‘street language’ spoken by such youth. (Doran, 2003: 39).

In the case of the Afro-Caribbean boys and girls, they used language as a key strategy to negotiate their identity. Their use of Jamaican patois in challenging the white teachers represented their use of the ‘black’ identity assigned to them by the English society in a way that signalled their empowerment. They were countering the practice of misrecognition by constructing a means whereby they would be recognised by those who had denied them that recognition.

According to Michael Pickering, ‘Your struggle for identity is confined to recognition by those who have denied your identity’. (Pickering, 2004: 102-3). Their challenge to ‘dominant discourses’ was mounted in the classroom, which was the site of misrecognition. The next section explains the significance of supplementary schools.

#### **4. 2. Supplementary schools as another site for the exercise of educational agency**

*“The ‘Black’ child acquires two fundamental attitudes or beliefs as a result of his experiencing the British school system: a low self-image, and consequently low-level expectations in life.” (Coard, 1971: 31).*

The Birmingham Afro-Caribbean Self Help Organisation set up a Supplementary school in the 1970s. This was one of the sites where the exercise of educational agency represented the rise of Black Studies. Here the mechanism of schooling was used by its founders to create a self-identity for Afro-Caribbean pupils and themselves on their own terms. In the Saturday school the teaching of ‘culturally relevant history’ aimed at awakening ‘black consciousness’ and was part of the wider movement of ‘Black Britishness’. Parents also assisted as teachers. (Chevannes and Reeves, 1986: 149).

The supplementary schools should be considered in the light of the broader spectrum of the Black Education Movement and the publishing of Caribbean literature and history. The contribution of John La Rose to the founding of this movement is noteworthy here. He was a radical educationalist who aimed at ‘social transformation through the process of developing, distributing and applying knowledge in the real world’. (Myers, 2009: 812). His promotion of ‘Black Studies’ in England informed the philosophy and practice of several ‘black’ supplementary schools founded in the 1970s and 1980s. The curriculum subjects, such as English, mathematics and ‘black’ history aimed at helping ‘black’ pupils to gain self-confidence. (Myers, 2009: 812).

The biography of Marcus Garvey by Adolophe Edwards, which was published by the New Beacon, is an example of the type of text which promoted ‘black’ awareness. (Myers, 2009: 812). The liberation philosophy of the Civil Rights, Black Power and Pan-African movements influenced the ideology behind the role of ‘Black Studies’.

It could be interpreted that the exercise of educational agency in supplementary schools was also aimed at investing *cultural capital* in ‘black’ pupils. In her investigation of the West

Indian community in Leicester, Chessum concluded that a supplementary school was set up by members of the West Indian community and aimed at countering the ‘damaging effect of the system on the achievement of ‘black’ children’. (Chessum, 1997: 429). The next section explains the ‘Black Britishness’ movement.

#### **4. 3. The ‘Black Britishness’ movement as a site for the exercise of collective agency in the negotiation of identities.**

*“...we described the growing tendency for the ethnic minority people to identify themselves as Black-British or British-Asians as a positive sign of their ‘claim to belong’. But belonging is a tricky concept, requiring both identification and recognition. If people from ethnic minorities are to become not only citizens with equal rights, but also an integral part of the national culture, then the meaning of the term ‘British’ will have to become more inclusive of their experiences, values and aspirations. Otherwise, Britain will be a multi-ethnic, mono-cultural society, which is a contradiction in terms. The binding function of national identity only works if individuals can somehow see themselves reflected in the culture. Otherwise, they may feel British, but will not be publicly recognised to be so.” (The Sunday Observer, 15 October 2000. p.1).*

This study has shown that the state has created a ‘black’ identity for ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their offspring through the process of racialisation. ‘The story of the Island race’, with the image of white homogeneity, continues to inform the marginalisation of ‘black’ immigrant settlers in the wider society. For example, consider the racialised discourse of the historian, David Starkey.

However, the second and third generations of these immigrant settlers want to be recognised by the state as ‘an integral part of the national culture’. By asserting ‘their claim to belong’ they are exercising collective agency in the negotiation of identities. The site for this is the



‘Black British’ movement. What they are saying in this claim is that “We are the Black British.” (Hall, 1989:24). Some claim that they have ‘a relationship’ to Jamaica, but that they are more than that now. That they are ‘*inside*’ the English culture..., ‘looking like we own a part of the turf, looking like we belong’. (Hall, 1989:24).

Negotiation is viewed as a transactional interaction process, in which individuals attempt to evoke, assert and/or support their own and others’ ‘desired self-images, in particular ethnic identity’. (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In the case of ‘Black British’ the ‘desired self-image’ could be interpreted as having the characteristic of *hybridity*. According to the cultural theorist Bhabha, the idea of *hybridity* provides a ‘third space’. This ‘third space’ allows for ‘the appearance of new and alternative identity options’. (Bhabha, 1990:211). This construction of a ‘third space’ has to be recognised by the other party, namely the state, in the negotiation process. For example, the construction of space for working class culture in the English national culture was identified and recognised by the state. Is the state prepared to negotiate? Would that negotiation take the form of the state redefining *Englishness* that would make it inclusive of the ‘Black British’ identity? Hall’s position is that if the second and third generations of ‘black’ immigrant settlers are to feel an integral part of mainstream society, then the term ‘British’ will need to be redefined through negotiation. (*The Sunday Observer*, 15 October 2000, p.1).

Contrast this view with that of Enoch Powell in 1968. His racialised discourse reflected his belief that *Englishness* was fixed and that ‘black’ immigrants who were born in England could never be part of *Englishness*. (Smithies & Fiddick, 1969: 35- 43.)

According to Pavlenko, the notion of ‘negotiation of identities needs to be approached from a socio-historical perspective: identities considered to be negotiable at present may have been assumed or non-negotiable 100 years ago’. (Pavlenko, 2003: 22). Pavlenko analysed the ‘turn-of-the-century immigrant memoirs’. Her analysis showed that European immigrant writers, ‘drawing on the rhetoric of individual uplift, successfully re-imagined American national identity in a way that would make it negotiable for new European arrivals’. (Pavlenko, 2003: 22). Could this situation be used as an analogy for the second and third generation ‘black’ immigrant settlers who have re-imagined themselves as ‘Black British’? They have a narrative from which they can claim affinity to *Englishness*. According to Hall, ‘third generation young ‘Black’ men and women know that they come from the Caribbean, know that they are Black, know that they are British. They want to speak from all three identities. They are not prepared to give up any of them’. (Hall, 1991: 59). According to Owusu, second generation of ‘black’ youth regarded Britain/England as ‘their home and according to one of the symbolic slogans of the time, they were ‘Here to stay!’’. (Owusu, 2000: 9). Would the narrative of the ‘Black British’ have to be first recognised as part of English national history? According to Gillis, narratives of minority groups are not offered ‘admission to national memories’. (Gillis, 1994: 10).

The next section explains the contributions of Black Cultural Studies to the narrative of the ‘black’ immigrant settlers.

‘Black’ British Cultural Studies acted as a site for the exercise of educational agency.

*“The important work initiated by Stuart Hall at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCS) in Birmingham opened up new dialogues on Black cultural identity, effectively challenging the notion that British culture was quintessentially ‘white’.” (Owusu, 2000: 3).*

Black British Cultural Studies promoted the mapping of the ‘Black’ cultural identity through the achievements of ‘black’ people in the ‘Mother Country’. This ‘Black’ cultural identity was represented by political discourse, the visual arts and film, music, and literature. ‘Black’ experience is shown here as having a positive side to it. The construction of a ‘Black British’ identity had a motivating force. According to Hall, ‘Third generation young ‘Black’ men and women... will contest the Thatcherite notion of *Englishness*, because they say this *Englishness* is ‘Black’’. (Hall, 1991: 59). Black British Cultural Studies provided second and third generations with a position from which to use the differences in their culture to carry out that contest.

One means of expression was through the discourse of ‘black’ political struggle. This type of discourse was evidenced in the works of Sivanandan. Stuart Hall described him as a ‘scholar with the capacity to go directly for the seminal issue, and to give that issue an original formulation’. (Hall, 1991). The works of film-makers and photographers formed part of the Black British cultural renaissance of the 1980s. What they created through their films and photography was their narrative, which was born from the difference in their culture and their everyday experience in the ‘Mother Country’.

In the field of photography ‘black’ women made their contribution. According to Pratibha Parmar, the photographic work of such women ‘has sought to rework and re-inscribe the language and conventions of representation, not simply to articulate our cultural difference, but to strive beyond this and develop a narrative that is wholly encased within our terms of

reference’. (Parmar, 1990: 101). According to Hall, ‘Photography is one of the languages in which people speak about their own past and their own experience and construct their own identity’. (Hall, 1989: 24). They were empowered through photography to be the narrators of their own story in the Mother Country.

Film-making was another site for the exercise of educational agency. Such film-makers as Isaac Julien and Martina Attille were strongly influenced by the writings of Stuart Hall, which covered new reflections on ‘Black Britishness’. Isaac Julien directed such films as *Black and White in Colour*, *Passion and Remembrance*, and his docu-drama on Franz Fanon. Another film that emerged was *My Beautiful Launderette* made by Stephen Freers and Hanif Kureshi. According to Stuart Hall, it concerned a complex story involving two gay men as the central characters. Hanif Kureshi, in response to his critics, concluded that ‘if there is to be a serious attempt to understand present day Britain with its mix of races and colours, its hysteria and despair, then writing about it has to be complex’. (Hall, 1991: 60).

Birmingham was the micro-setting for John Akomfrah’s *Handsworth Songs* (1986). This was a film that the Black Audio Film Collective had produced. From this limited setting the West Indian narrative was built up with the use of ‘historical footage of Birmingham’. The images that were produced included those of ‘hopeful migrants arriving in the 1950s and an anti-National Front demonstration in Handsworth in 1977’. (Myers and Grosvenor, 2011: 156). The archival material had told the story of ‘black’ immigrant settlers and that of the Mother Country. Consider the approach in *The Handsworth Songs* whereby the historical images of Birmingham were used to tell the story of ‘black’ immigrant settlers and the colonial past. That approach of moving from the particular to the general could be interpreted as being similar to the approach used by Hobsbawm in writing ‘The Age of Empire’. Hobsbawm

opened this history ‘with a vignette of the individual destinies of his own parents’.

(Hobsbawm, 1987: 3). He was moving from the specific to the general in the writing of this work. The question of whether the ‘historical footage of Birmingham represented social memory or history’ is open to interpretation. Hobsbawm himself pondered on the nature of what he terms the ‘twilight zone between history and memory’ when he wrote ‘The Age of the Empire’. (Hobsbawm. 1987: 3). (Quoted by Schwarz, 2004: 2).

Black performance poetry emerged in the 1980s. Poets such as Benjamin Zephania and Linton Kwesi Johnson were leaders in this field. (Owusu, 2000: 7). Other significant developments within the Black British renaissance was the establishment of the annual Notting Hill Carnival as one of Europe’s biggest street events and the emergence of such popular music as ‘home-grown reggae’ and ‘Black British jazz’. (Owusu, 2000: 9).

The narrative evidenced in the cultural achievements of the ‘Black British’ men and women in the ‘Mother Country’ provided significant support for their ‘claim to belong’ as an integral part of society. The next section highlights the rise of West Indian Intellectuals.

#### **4. 4. The rise of West Indian Intellectuals in postcolonial England as part of the movement of ‘Black Britishness’.**

*“This, then, is the hypothesis: that generations of West Indian migrants coming to Britain in the twentieth century brought with them the gift of a particular vantage from which to comprehend the civilization of the mother country. The work of the accredited intellectuals (calypso singers as much as novelists) was to transform this collective experience into a public language which, in turn, could become the medium through which new lives could be imagined after colonialism.” (Schwarz, 2003:18)*

In this section, writing will be shown as a site for the exercise of educational agency by West Indian Intellectuals in order to support the 'claim to belong' that is endemic to the movement of 'Black Britishness'. In the field of 'black' British cinema, Hall advocated the use of 'metaphors of transformation' in an attempt 'to theorise identity as constituted, not outside but within representation; and hence of cinema, not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which is able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak'. (Hall, 1990: 236 - 237). Just as Hall attempted to 'theorise identity', so did the West Indian Intellectuals find new ways of representing 'black' cultural identity. I will now discuss the works of some of these writers.

Consider one of the novels of George Lamming, namely, *The Emigrant*, published in 1954, soon after his arrival in England from Barbados. It marked the emergence of the West Indian novel both as a literary genre and as 'a place from which to speak'. The story covered an encounter between an English couple and a Trinidadian student in England. In this micro-encounter Lamming was able to construct 'a sense of reality from which the unspeakabilities of race and apprehensions of violence ensue'. (Schwarz, 2003: 10). This encounter between the once colonised people took place in the country of the colonisers, namely, England. However, the West Indian immigrants brought with them both their own culture and English culture, which had fashioned their schooling in the West Indies. The Trinidadian student in the story was able to converse with his hosts in the English language, for example. Lamming was able to tell the narrative of the West Indians within the story of the novel. Lamming and the other West Indian writers wanted to establish the West Indian narrative as part of the narrative of the Mother Country.

Another example of the West Indian Intellectuals using their writing as ‘a public language’ to spread their narrative was C. L. R. James’ essay on ‘The West Indian Intellectuals’. James was greatly influenced by the ‘spirited rebuttal’ by the Trinidadian schoolmaster, John Jacob Thomas, who had come to London in order to ‘engage in the intellectual culture which had formed him’. According to Schwarz, the work of John Jacob Thomas, known as *Froudacity. West Indian fables, by James Anthony Froude (1888)* was ‘the formative text of black West Indian intellectual self-determination.’ (Schwarz, 2003: 4). C. L. R. James concluded that it was Thomas’ consciousness of his West Indian past that had prompted him to write *Froudacity*. In his essay, C. L. R. James pointed out that West Indian writers, whether of fiction or politics, had made an impact on ‘the consciousness and civilisation of Western Europe and the United States’ and that this was ‘due in reality to our historical past, the situation in which our historical past has placed us’. (James, 1968) (Quoted in Schwarz, 2003:4).

The hope behind the ‘Black Britishness’ movement seems to be that the ‘claim to belong’ will be granted ‘identification and recognition’ by *the imagined community*. This will need the state to acknowledge ‘that ideas of national belonging’ will have to change. (Hall, *The Sunday Observer*, 15 October 2000, p.1).

## **Conclusion**

An element of doubt still lingers and can be interpreted in some of Hall’s reflections:

“...in spite of these rich cultural ‘roots’, the new cultural politics is operating on new and quite distinct ground – specifically, contestation over what it means to be ‘British’.” (Hall, 1992: 258).

Does this note of lingering doubt mean that the exercise of agency by the ‘black’ immigrant settlers and the later generations has not been recognised by the state? Has the rise of such movements as ‘Black Britishness’ resulted in constructing an *imagined community* rather than inclusion into the national identity?

This chapter aimed at putting into perspective the continuous unfolding of both ‘the story of the Island race’ and the narrative of the ‘black’ immigrant settlers. It was shown how the juxtaposition of these narratives was promoted by the practices of racialisation carried out by parliament and the school. The exercise of collective agency, which was reflected in the rise of the ‘Black Britishness’ movement denoted some positive effort to substantiate the ‘claim to belong’. The rise of this movement was a most significant challenge to *the imagined community*. However, the question still remains as to whether *the imagined community* will ever apply the ‘biological analogy’ to the ‘black’ immigrant settlers and their offspring as it did the white ‘working class’. It is worth considering an observation made by Stuart Hall in the special report: What is Britain?

*“By now, few people can imagine the British Olympic team without a ‘black’ face. On the other hand, during the recent celebration of ‘Britain’s Finest Hour’ it was not the faces of Asian and Caribbean World War II volunteers which automatically first came to mind. Where were they in the fly-past?” (Hall, The Sunday Observer, 15 October 2000, p.1).*



## CONCLUSION

*“West Indian children were seen as dunces who didn’t know anything.” (Chessum, 2000: 166)*

*“The housing is terrible - this is one of the major things. Ever since birth Black people have been put in bad areas. Our preferences are ignored...” (A Different Reality, 1986: 23)*

*“...an archetypical, successful black man” [and] “if you turned the screen off, so that you were listening to him on radio, you’d think he was white.” (BBC News UK. Interview on BBC Newsnight with David Starkey. First aired Friday 22 August 2011)*

The aim of this study is to offer a way of researching and analysing the experiences of ‘black’ pupils in the history of education in post-1945 Britain. Their experiences of marginalisation reflected the fact that the state viewed ‘black’ immigrant settlers as posing a ‘black’ threat to the white homogeneity of the English race. ‘Black’ immigrant settlers and their children were given a ‘black’ identity by the state in order to set them apart as ‘outsiders’. The first of the above extracts reflects the reality of the experiences of marginalisation suffered by ‘black’ pupils. The second extract presents the reality of the daily lives of many ‘black’ immigrant settlers. These hardships were expressed by ‘black’ immigrant settlers living in Handsworth, Birmingham in 1986. However, these were the same situations experienced by ‘black’ immigrant settlers in other parts of England at that time and in the twenty-first century. The third extract is from the racialised discourse by the historian, David Starkey, concerning the riots in August 2011. He was referring to David Lammy, the ‘black’ Labour MP for

Tottenham. It reflects the fact that the essential characteristic of whiteness is still a requirement in order to be part of the English national identity. David Lammy sounded white, but he was in fact 'black'. The essential characteristic of whiteness is endemic to 'the story of the Island race', which is still unfolding. This characteristic is shown to be supported by the mechanisms of the Anglo-Saxon myth, the interplay of the ideologies of racism and English nationalism, the 'biological organism' analogy, 'invented traditions', education, teacher identity and schooling.

'Black' immigrants came as British citizens under the aegis of the British Nationality Act 1948. They had the right to enter and settle with their children. The dilemma for the state was that they were 'black' and could not be part of the English national identity. The 'black' immigrant settlers themselves regarded England as the Mother Country and claimed certain affinities with the country. The state constructed a 'black' identity for the 'black' immigrant settlers and their children through the process of racialisation.

My study sets this process of racialisation within the overarching framework of *the imagined community*. This framework is based on the application of Benedict Anderson's concept of *the imagined community* to the English society. It has been argued that *the imagined community* is the English nation and that *Englishness* is the English national identity. The relevant statutes that supported the process of racialisation were the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 and the Immigration Act 1971. The 1962 Act controlled the admission of 'black' immigrants for settlement through a system of vouchers. This meant that the relationship between 'black' immigrants and England had been altered. England then viewed itself as the 'host' country and not the 'Mother Country'. This new relationship was confirmed through the 1971 Act. Legislation had re-defined who had the right of entry and

settlement. The introduction of the concept of 'patriality' in 1971 re-defined who had the right of entry and settlement. Nationality legislation was used by parliament to reconstruct *Englishness* and to construct a 'black' identity for 'black' immigrant settlers. The process of racialisation was continued by the ideology of New Racism. *Englishness* was redefined to include the people of the Falkland Islands, but not the 'black' immigrant settlers.

The first two extracts above show 'black' immigrant settlers as victims. The extract from David Starkey's racialised discourse refers to David Lammy, who is a 'black' MP in an essentially white domain. It has been argued that second and third generations of 'black' men and women have sought positions from which to put their narrative into the public domain. For example, Hall has claimed that 'identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves, within the narratives of the past'. (Hall, 1990: 225). Consider that David Lammy is a 'black' MP in an English parliament. Using the words of Hall, David Lammy is '*inside*' the English culture. (Hall, 1989: 24). He has given himself a position from which to extend the narrative of the 'Black British'. Max Farrar has acknowledged that there 'is a growing catalogue of high achievement, which bursts the boundaries unwittingly set by those who see nothing but persecution and humiliation in the black experience'. (Grosvenor, 1997: 198). However, according to Grosvenor, 'Who is listening?' (Grosvenor, 1997: 196). The answer seems to be that no one is listening. Consider the racialised discourse of David Starkey in 2011. White historians should be listening in order to put the narrative of the 'black' immigrant settlers and their offspring into the public domain as part of the national narrative. Until this is done the narrative of these people remains isolated as 'Black History'. According to Grosvenor, it bears only 'marginal status'. (Grosvenor, 1997: 197).

Historians narrate reality rather than myth. The narrative of the 'black' immigrant settlers is based on the fact that they make up a sizeable proportion of the population. Many have been born and schooled in England. The 'Black British' identity is different, but it is one located in the 'Mother Country'. According to Hall, second and third generation young men and women claim that they are 'Black British' and that they want to be acknowledged as an integral part of mainstream English society. (Hall, 1989:24). Many members have been successful and are making notable contributions to society in different professions. A case in point is that of David Lammy. They 'are not just living here', to use the words of Norman Tebbit. (*The Times*, 21 April 1990). (Quoted in The Runnymede Trust Bulletin, 1990: p.3). However, Norman Tebbit's 'cricket test' reflects his staunch belief that 'black' immigrant settlers are 'just living here'. He believed that identity is fixed. This racialised discourse of Norman Tebbit is representative of the view of the majority of the Conservatives about preserving *Englishness*. It also shows that the key obstacle facing white historians seems to be the dynamics of the process of racialisation. It has permeated so many areas of life, including English politics and the direct link with the aim of History in the school curriculum, that there is a danger that white historians might be regarded by the Conservatives as taking sides with 'black' immigrant settlers and their offspring. An analogy to support this view can be drawn from the observations made by Catherine Hall concerning the Labour Party's response to the 'xenophobic utterances of Conservative politicians'. She felt that the Labour Party had been 'singularly weak' on such issues as identity, history and the nation because they were 'nervous of being identified with black people, or the Irish and the 'Celtic fringes' ..., [it] has clung to its conviction that it must respond to the right's agenda on the nation, rather than imagining a different kind of future.' (Hall, 1996: 67). (Grosvenor, 1997: 195). The view of the Conservatives is that the national identity is fixed and is supported by the Anglo-Saxon

myth. Consider the stance taken by a Conservative peer during the Conservative government of John Major in 1996. He said, 'If you say that I am a racist, yes I certainly am and proud of it. I am an Anglo-Saxon and I want to keep this country Anglo-Saxon'. (Quoted in Grosvenor, 1997: 194). Consider also the racialised discourse of the white historian, David Starkey in August 2011 during the Conservative government under David Cameron. Consider the ideology of New Racism and the racialised discourse by Mrs. Thatcher, as discussed in my study. What was the role of History in the school curriculum? White historians would have to overcome their political obligation to write history that would promote English traditional values and 'way of life'.

I have argued that *the imagined community* and the English national identity are constructed. If this view is accepted then the element of flexibility is applicable to both *the imagined community* and the English national identity. My argument also emphasises that the inflexibility of the 'black' identity created by the state through parliament and the school for 'black' immigrant settlers and their offspring can be challenged. The 'claim to belong' as an integral part of mainstream society has been asserted by second and third generations under the 'Black Britishness' movement. The key mechanism that supports this claim is the exercise of both individual and collective educational agency, as argued in this study.

There ought to be room for the continued negotiation of identities involving the 'Black British', the state and white historians within the framework of the concept of *hybridity* and the reality of the existence of the 'black' population in the society and the growth of metropolitanism. The notion of *hybridity* has to be considered as offering a way of re-imagining *Englishness*. According to Catherine Hall, 'the post-colonial moment in Britain is

the moment after Empire when British identities have to be re-imagined anew'. (Hall, 1996: 76).

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